ADVENTURES IN JOURNALISM

PHILIP GIBBS

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By

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"NOW IT CAN BE TOLD," "MORE THAT MUST BE TOLD," Etc.

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Adventures in Journalism

I

THE adventure of journalism which has been mine—as editor, reporter, and war correspondent—is never a life of easy toil and seldom one of rich rewards. I would not recommend it to youth as a primrose path, nor to anyone who wishes to play for safety in possession of an assured income, regular hours, and happy home life.

It is of uncertain tenure, because no man may hold on to his job if he weakens under the nervous strain, or quarrels on a point of honor with the proprietor who pays him or with the editor who sets his task. Even the most successful journalist—if he is on the writing side of a newspaper—can rarely bank on past achievements, however long and brilliant, but must forever jerk his brain and keep his curiosity untired.

As nobody, according to the proverb, has ever seen a dead donkey, so nobody has ever seen a retired reporter living on the proceeds of his past toil, like business men in other adventures of life. He must go on writing and recording, getting news until the pen drops from his hand, or the little bell tinkles for the last time on his typewriter, and his head falls over an unfinished sentence. . . . Well, I hope that will happen to me, but some people look forward to an easier old age.

I have known the humiliation of journalism, its insecurity, its never-ending tax upon the mind and heart, its

squalor, its fever, its soul-destroying machinery for those who are not proof against its cruelties. Hundreds of times, as a young reporter, I was stretched to the last pull of nervous energy on some "story" which was wiped out for more important news. Often I went without food and sleep, suffered in health of body and mind, girded myself to audacities from which, as a timid soul, I shrank, in order to get a "scoop"—which failed.

The young reporter has to steel his heart to these disappointments. He must not agonize too much if, after a day and night of intense and nervous effort, he finds no line of his work in the paper, or sees his choicest prose hacked and mangled by impatient subeditors, or his truth-telling twisted into falsity.

He is the slave of the machine. Home life is not for him, as for other men. He may have taken unto himself a wife—poor girl!—but though she serves his little dinner all piping hot, he has to leave the love feast for the bleak streets, if the voice of the news editor calls down the telephone.

So, at least, it was in my young days as a reporter on London newspapers, and many a time in those days I cursed the fate which had taken me to Fleet Street as a slave of the press.

Several times I escaped; taking my courage in both hands—and it needed courage, remembering a wife and babe—I broke with the spell of journalism and retired into quieter fields of literary life.

But always I went back! The lure of the adventure was too strong. The thrill of chasing the new "story," the interest of getting into the middle of life, sometimes behind the scenes of history, the excitement of recording sensational acts in the melodrama of reality, the meetings with heroes, rogues, and oddities, the front seats at the peep show of life, the comedy, the change, the comradeship, the rivalry, the test of one's own quality of

character and vision, drew me back to Fleet Street as a strong magnet.

It was, after all, a great game! It is still one of the best games in the world for any young man with quick eyes, a sense of humor, some touch of quality in his use of words, and curiosity in his soul for the truth and pageant of our human drama, provided he keeps his soul unsullied from the dirt.

Looking back on my career as a journalist, I know that I would not change for any other. Fleet Street, which I called in a novel *The Street of Adventure,* is still my home, and to its pavement my feet turn again from whatever part of the world I return.

When I first entered the street, twenty years ago alas! the social status of press men was much lower than at present, when the pendulum has swung the other way, so that newspaper proprietors wear coronets, the purlieus of Fleet Street are infested with barons and baronets, and even reporters have been knighted by the King. In my early days a journalist did not often get nearer to a Cabinet Minister than the hall porter of his office. It was partly his own fault, or at least, the fault of those who paid him miserably, because the old-time reporter—before Northcliffe, who was then Harmsworth, revised his salary and his status—was often an ill-dressed fellow, conscious of his own social inferiority, cringing in his manner to the great, and content to slink round to the back doors of life, rather than boldly assault the front-door knocker. Having a good conceit of myself and a sensitive pride, I received many hard knocks and humiliations which, no doubt, were good for my soul.

I resented the insolence of society women whom I was sent to interview. Even now I remember with humiliation a certain Duchess who demanded that, in return for a ticket to her theatrical entertainment, I should submit my "copy" to her before sending it to the paper. Weakly,

I agreed, for my annoyance was extreme when an insolent footman demanded my article and carried it on a silver salver, at some distance from his liveried body, lest he should be contaminated by so vile a thing, to Her Grace and her fair daughters in an adjoining room. I heard them reading it, and their mocking laughter. . . . I raged at the haughty arrogance of young government officials who treated me as "one of those damned fellows on the press." I laughed bitterly and savagely at a certain Mayor of Bournemouth who revealed in one simple sentence (which he thought was kind) the attitude of public opinion toward the press which it despised—and feared.

"You know," he told me in a moment of candor, "I always treat journalists as though they were gentlemen."

For some time I disliked all mayors because of that confession, and a year or two later, when conditions were changing, I was able to take a joyous revenge from one of them, who was the Mayor of Limerick. He did not even treat journalists as though they were gentlemen. He treated them as though they were ruffians who ought to be thrust into the outer darkness.

King Edward was making a Royal Progress through Ireland—it was before the days of Sinn Fein—and, with a number of other correspondents, some of whom are now famous men, it was my duty to await and describe his arrival at Limerick and report his speech in answer to the address.

Seeing us standing in a group, the Mayor demanded to know why we dared to stand on the platform where the King was about to arrive, when strict orders had been given that none but the Mayor and Corporation, and the Guard of Honor, were permitted on that space. "Get outside the station!" shouted the Mayor of Limerick, "or I'll put my police on to ye!"

Explanations were useless. Protests did not move the Mayor. To avoid an unpleasant scene, we retired out-

side the station, indignantly. But I was resolved to get on that platform and defeat the Mayor at all costs. I noticed the appearance of an officer in cocked hat, plumes, and full uniform, whom I knew to be General Pole-Carew, commanding the troops in Ireland, and in charge of the royal journey. I accosted him boldly, told him the painful situation of the correspondents who were there to describe the King's tour and record his speeches. He was courteous and kind. Indeed, he did a wonderful and fearful thing. The Mayor and Corporation were already standing on a red carpet enclosed by brass railings, immediately opposite the halting place of the King's train. General Pole-Carew gave the Mayor a tremendous dressing down which made him grow first purple and then pale, and ordered him, with his red-gowned satellites, to clear out of that space to the far end of the platform. General Pole-Carew then led the newspaper men to the red carpet enclosed by brass railings. It was to us that King Edward read out his reply to the address which was handed to him, while the Mayor and Corporation glowered sulkily.

Unduly elated by this victory, perhaps, one of my colleagues who had been a skipper on seagoing tramps before adopting the more hazardous profession of the press, resented, a few days later, being "cooped up" in the press box at Punchestown races which King Edward was to attend in semi-state. Nothing would content his soul but a place on the Royal Stand. I accompanied him to see the fun, but regretted my temerity when, without challenge, we stood, surrounded by princes and peers of Ireland, at the top of the gangway up which the King was to come. I think they put down my friend the skipper as the King's private detective. He wore a blue reefer coat and a bowler hat with a curly brim. By good luck I was in a tall hat and morning suit, like the rest of the company. Presently the King came, in a little pageant of state carriages with outriders in scarlet and gold, and

then, with his gentlemen, he ascended the gangway, shaking hands with all who were assembled on the stairs. The skipper, who was a great patriot, and loved King Edward as a "regular fellow," betrayed himself by the warmth of his greeting. Grasping the King's hand in a sailorman's grip, he shook it long and ardently, and expressed the hope that His Majesty was quite well.

King Edward was startled by this unconventional welcome, and a few moments later, after some whispered words, one of his equerries touched the skipper on the shoulder and requested him politely to seek some other place. I basely abandoned my colleague, and betrayed no kind of acquaintance with him, but held to the advantage of my tall hat, and spent an interesting morning listening to King Edward's conversation with the Irish gentry. Prince Arthur of Connaught was there, and I remember that King Edward clapped him on the back and chaffed him because he had not yet found a wife. "It's time you got married, young fellow," said his illustrious uncle.

That memory brings me to the importance of clothes in the career of a journalist. It was Lord Northcliffe, then Alfred Harmsworth, who gave me good advice on the subject at the outset of my journalistic experience.

"Always dress well," he said, "and never spoil the picture by being in the wrong costume. I like the appearance of my young men to be a credit to the profession. It is very important."

That advice, excellent in its way, was sometimes difficult to follow, owing to the rush and scurry of a reporter's life. It is difficult to be correctly attired for a funeral in the morning and for a wedding in the afternoon, at least so far as the color of one's tie.

I remember being jerked off to a shipwreck on the Cornish coast in a tall hat and frock coat which startled the simple fishermen who were rescuing ladies on a life line.

A colleague of mine who specialized in dramatic criticism was suddenly ordered to write a bright article about a garden party at Buckingham Palace. Unfortunately he had come down to the office that morning in a blue serge suit and straw hat, which is not the costume worn on such occasions. One of the King's gentlemen, more concerned, I am sure, than the King, at this breach of etiquette, requested him to conceal himself behind a tree.

The absence of evening dress clothes, owing to a hurried journey, has often been a cause of embarrassment to myself and others, with the risk of losing important news for lack of this livery.

So it was when I was invited to attend a banquet given to Doctor Cook in Copenhagen, when he made his claim of having discovered the North Pole. For reasons which I shall tell later in these memories, it was of great importance to me to be present at that dinner, where Doctor Cook was expected to tell the story of his amazing journey. But I had traveled across Europe with a razor and a toothbrush, and had no evening clothes. For a shilling translated into Danish money, I borrowed the dress suit of an obliging young waiter. He was a taller man than I, and the sleeves of his coat fell almost to my wrists, and the trousers bagged horribly below the knees. His waistcoat was also rather grease-stained by the accidents inevitable to his honorable avocation. In this attire I proceeded self-consciously to the Tivoli Palace where the banquet was held. I had to ascend a tall flight of marble steps, and, being late, I was alone and conspicuous.

Feeling like Hop-o'-my-Thumb in the giant's clothes, I pulled myself together, hitched up my waiter's trousers, and advanced up the marble stairs. Suddenly I was aware of a fantastic happening. I found myself, as the fairy tales say, receiving a salute from a guard of honor. Swords flashed from their scabbards and my fevered vision was conscious of a double line of figures dressed

in the scarlet coats and buckskin breeches of the English Life Guards.

"This," I said to myself, "is what comes to a man who hires a waiter's clothes. I have undoubtedly gone crazy. There are no English Life Guards in Copenhagen. But there is certainly a missing button at the back of my trousers."

It was the chorus of the Tivoli Music Hall which was providing the Guard of Honor, and they were tall and lovely ladies.

I was caught napping again, not very long ago, when the King of the Belgians granted my request for a special interview. An official of the British Embassy, who conveyed that acceptance to me, also advised me that I must wear a frock coat and top hat when I visited the Palace, for that appointment which, he said, was at four o'clock. I had come to Brussels without a frock coat—and indeed I had not worn that detestable garment for years—and without a top hat. I decided to buy or hire them in Brussels.

It was Saturday morning, and I spent several hours searching for ready-made frock coats. Ultimately I hired one which had certainly been made for a Belgian burgomaster of considerable circumference—and I am a lean man, and little. I also acquired a top hat which was of a style favored by London cabbies forty years ago, low in the crown and broad and curly in the brim. I carried these parcels back, hoping that by holding my hat in the presence of Majesty, and altering the buttons on the frock coat, I might maintain a dignified appearance.

I did not make a public appearance in that costume however, as I missed the hour for the interview owing to a mistake of the British Embassy.

As a young man, before serious things like wars and revolutions, plagues and famines entered into my sphere of work, I spent most of my days on *The Daily Mail, The*

Daily Chronicle, and other papers, chasing the "stunt" story, which was then a new thing in English journalism, having crossed the water from the United States and excited the imagination of such pioneers as Harmsworth and Pearson. The old dullness and dignity of the English Press had been rudely challenged by this new outlook on life, and by the novel interpretation of the word "news" by men like Harmsworth himself. Formerly "news" was limited in the imagination of English editors to verbatim reports of political speeches, the daily record of police courts, and the hard facts of contemporary history, recorded in humdrum style. Harmsworth changed all that. "News," to him, meant anything which had a touch of human interest for the great mass of folk, any happening or idea which affected the life, clothes, customs, food, health, and amusements of middle-class England. Under his direction, *The Daily Mail,* closely imitated by many others, regarded life as a variety show. No "turn" must be long or dull. Whether it dealt with tragedy or comedy, high politics or other kinds of crime, it was admitted, not because of its importance to the nation or the world, but because it made a good "story" for the breakfast table.

In pursuit of that ideal—not very high, but not a bad school for those in search of human knowledge—I became one of that band of colleagues and rivals who were sent here, there, and everywhere on the latest "story." It led us into queer places, often on foolish and futile missions. It brought us in touch with strange people, both high and low in the social world. It was my privilege to meet kings and princes, murderers and thieves, politicians and publicans, saints and sinners, along the roads of life in many countries. As far as kings are concerned, I cannot boast that familiarity once claimed by Oscar Browning who, when he showed the ex-Kaiser over Cambridge, asserted to the undergraduates who questioned him after-

ward that "He is one of the nicest emperors I have ever met."

With rogues and vagabonds I confess I have had a more extensive acquaintance. The amusement of the game of finding a "story" was the unexpectedness of the situation in which one sometimes found oneself, and the personal experience which did not appear in print. As a trivial instance, I remember how I went to inquire into a ghost story and became, surprisingly, the ghost.

Down in the West of England there was, and still is, a great house so horribly haunted (according to local tales) that the family to which it has belonged for centuries abandoned its ancient splendor and lived near by in a modern villa. Interest was aroused when a young chemist claimed that he had actually taken a photograph of one of the ghosts during a night he had spent alone in the old house. I obtained a copy of this photograph, which was certainly a good "fake," and I was asked to spend a night in the house myself with an Irish photographer who might have equal luck with some other spirit.

Together we traveled down to the haunted house, which we found to be an old Elizabethan mansion surrounded by trees, and next to a graveyard. It was dark when we arrived, with the intention of making a burglarious entry. Before ten minutes had passed the Irish photographer was saying his prayers, and I had a cold chill down my spine at the sighing of the wind through the trees, the hooting of an owl, and the little squeaks of the bats that flitted under the eaves. With false courage we endeavored to make our way into the house. Every window was shuttered, every door bolted, and we could find no way of entry into a building that rambled away with many odd nooks and corners. At last I found a door which seemed to yield.

"Stand back!" I said to the Irish photographer. I

took a run and hurled my shoulder against the door. It gave, and I was precipitated into a room—not, as I found afterward, part of the Elizabethan mansion, but a neighboring farmhouse, where the farmer and his family were seated at an evening meal. Their shrieks and yells were piercing, and they believed that the ghosts next door were invading them. . . . I and the photographer fled without further explanation.

On another day I went down into the country to interview a dear old clergyman, who had reached his hundredth year, and had been at school with the famous Doctor Arnold of Rugby. The old gentleman was stone deaf and for some time could not make out the object of my visit. At last it seemed to dawn on him. "Ah, yes!" he said. "You are the gentleman who is coming to sing at our concert to-night. How very kind of you to come all the way from London!" Vainly I endeavored to explain that I had come to interview him for a London paper. Presently he took me by the arm, and led me into his drawing-room, where a charming old lady was sitting by the fire knitting.

"My dear," said the centenarian parson, "this gentleman has come all the way from London to sing at our concert to-night."

I explained to her gently that it was not so, but she was also deaf, and could only hear her husband when she used her ear trumpet.

"How very kind of you to come all this way!" she said graciously.

Presently another old gentleman appeared on the scene and I was presented to him as the young gentleman who had come down from London to sing at the concert.

"Pardon me," I said; "it's all a mistake. I'm a newspaper reporter."

But the second old gentleman ignored my explanation. He had only caught the word "concert."

"Delighted to meet you!" he said. "We are all looking forward to your singing to-night!"

I slunk out of the house later, and drove back fifteen miles to the station. On the way I passed an old horse cab conveying a young man in the opposite direction. I felt certain that he actually was the young gentleman who was going to sing at the concert that night.

On another occasion I had the unfortunate experience of being taken for Mr. Winston Churchill. It was his luck and not mine, because it was at a time when a great number of Irishmen were lusting for his blood. I am no more like Mr. Churchill than I am like Lloyd George, except that we are both clean shaven and both happened to be driving in a blue car. It was on a day when there was trouble in Belfast (that city of peace!) and the Orangemen had sworn to prevent Churchill from speaking to the Catholic community on the Celtic Football Ground. They lined up for him thousands strong outside the railway station where he was due to arrive, and their pockets were loaded with "kidney" stones, and iron nuts from the shipyards. Churchill is a brave man, and faced them with such pluck that they did not attempt to injure him at that moment of his arrival, though afterwards they attacked his car in Royal Avenue and would have overturned it but for a charge of mounted police. He made his speech to the Catholic Irish and slipped out of Belfast by a different station. The mobs of Orangemen were awaiting his return in a blue car to a hotel in Royal Avenue, and it was my car, and my clean-shaven face under a bowler hat which went back to that hotel and caused a slight mistake among them. I was suddenly aware of ten thousand men yelling at me fiercely and threatening to tear me limb from limb. The police made a rush, and I and my companion escaped with only torn collars and the loss of dignity after a wild scrimmage on the steps of the hotel. For hours the mob waited

outside for Mr. Winston Churchill to depart, and I did not venture forth until the news of his going spread among them.

Such incidents are not enjoyable at the time. But a newspaper man with a sense of humor takes them as part of his day's work, and however trivial they may be, bides his time for big events of history in which, after his apprenticeship, he may find his chance as a chronicler of things that matter.

II

IT is one of the little ironies of a reporter's life that he finds himself at times in the company of those who sit in the seats of the mighty and those who possess the power of worldly wealth, when he, poor lad, is wondering whether his next article will pay for his week's rent, and jingles a few pieces of silver in a threadbare pocket.

It is true that most newspaper offices are liberal in the matter of expenses, so that while a "story" is in progress the newspaper man is able to put up at the best hotels, to hire motor cars with the ease of a millionaire, and to live so much like a lord that hall porters, Ministers of State, private detectives, and women of exalted rank are willing to treat him as such, if he plays the part well, and conceals his miserable identity. But there is always the feeling, to a sensitive fellow on the bottom rung of the journalistic ladder, that he is only a looker-on of life, a play actor watching from the wings, even a kind of Christopher Sly, belonging to the gutter but dressed up by some freak of fate, and invited to the banquet of the great.

The young newspaper man, if he is wise, and proud, with a sense of the dignity of his own profession, overcomes this foolish sense of inferiority by the noble thought that he may be (and probably is) of more importance to the world than people of luxury and exalted rank, and that, indeed, it is only by his words that many of them live at all. Unless he writes about them they do not exist. He is their critic, their judge, to some extent their creator. He it is who—as a man of letters—makes them famous or infamous, who gives the laurels of history to

the man of action—for there is no Ulysses without Homer —and who moves through the pageant of life as a modern Froissart, painting the word pictures of courts and camps, revealing what happens behind the scenes, giving the immortality of his words to little people he meets upon the way, or to kings and heroes. That point of view, with its youthful egotism, has been comforting to many young gentlemen who have taken rude knocks to their sensibility because of their profession; and there is some truth in it.

As a descriptive writer on London newspapers, I had that advantage of being poor among the rich, and lowly among the exalted. Among other experiences which fell to my lot was that of being a chronicler of royal processions, ceremonies, marriages, coronations, funerals, and other events in the lives of kings and princes.

I was once a literary attendant at the birth of a Princess, and look back to that event with particular gratitude because it gave me considerable acquaintance with the masterpieces of Dutch art and the beauties of Dutch cities. I also learned to read Dutch with fair ease, owing to the long delay in the arrival of Queen Wilhelmina's daughter.

For some reason, at a time before the Great War had given a new proportion to world events, this expectation of an heir to the Dutch throne was considered of enormous political importance, as the next of kin was a German prince. Correspondents and secret agents came from all parts of Europe to the little old city of the Hague, and I had among my brothers of the pen two of the best-known journalists in Europe, one of whom was Ludovic Nodeau of *Le Journal* and the other Hamilton Fyfe of *The Daily Mail.*

Every night in the old white palace of the Hague we three, and six others of various nationalities, were entertained to a banquet in the rooms of the Queen's Chamber-

lain, the Junkheer van Heen, who had placed his rooms at our disposal. Flunkeys in royal livery, with powdered wigs and silk stockings, conducted us with candles to a well-spread table, and always the Queen's Chamberlain announced to us solemnly in six languages, "Gentlemen, the happy event will take place to-morrow!"

To-morrow came, and a month of to-morrows, but no heir to the throne of Holland. Three times, owing to false rumors, the Dutch Army came into the streets and drank not wisely but too well to a new-born Prince who had not come!

Ludovic Nodeau, Hamilton Fyfe, and I explored Holland, learned Dutch, and saw the lime tree outside the palace become heavy with foliage, though it was bare at our coming.

The correspondent of *The Times* had a particular responsibility because he had promised to telephone to the British Ambassador, who, in his turn, was to telegraph to King Edward. at any time of the day or night that the event might happen. But the correspondent of *The Times,* who was a very young man, and "fed up" with all this baby stuff, absented himself from the banquet one night. In the early hours of the morning, when he was asleep at his hotel, the Queen's Chamberlain appeared, with tears running down his cheeks, and announced in six languages that a Princess had been born.

It was Hamilton Fyfe and I who gave the news to the Dutch people. As we ran down the street to the post office men and women came out on the balconies in their night attire and shouted for news.

"Princess! Princess!" we cried. An hour later the Hague was thronged with joyous, dancing people. That morning the Ministers of State linked hands and danced with the people down the main avenue—as though Lloyd George and his fellow ministers had performed a fox-trot in Whitehall. With quaint old-world customs, her-

alds and trumpeters announced the glad tidings, already known, and driving in a horse cab to watch I had a fight with a Dutch photographer who tried to take possession of my vehicle. That night the Dutch Army rejoiced again, boisterously.

Although I cannot boast of familiarity with emperors, like Oscar Browning, and have been more in the position of the cat who can look at a king, according to the proverb, I can claim to have heard one crowned head utter an epigram on the spur of the moment. It was in the war between Bulgaria and Turkey in 1912, and I was standing on the bridge over the Maritza River at Mustapha Pasha (now the new boundary of the Turks in Europe) when Ferdinand of Bulgaria arrived with his staff. Because of the climate, which was cold there, I was wearing the fur cap of a Bulgarian peasant, a sheepskin coat, and leggings, and believed myself to be thoroughly disguised as a Bulgar. But the King—a tall, fat old man with long nose and little shifty eyes, like a rogue elephant—"spotted" me at once as an Englishman, and, calling me up to him, chatted very civilly in my own language, which he spoke without an accent. At that moment there arrived the usual character who always does appear at the psychological moment in any part of the world's drama—a photographer of *The Daily Mail.* Ferdinand of Bulgaria had a particular hatred and dread of cameramen, believing that he might be assassinated by some enemy pretending to "snap" him. He raised his stick to strike the man down and was only reassured when I told him that he was a harmless Englishman, trying to carry out his profession as a press photographer.

"Photography is not a profession," said the King. "It's a damned disease."

One of the pleasantest jobs in pre-war days was a royal luncheon at the Guildhall, when the Lord Mayor of London and his Aldermen used to give the welcome of the

City to foreign potentates visiting the Royal Family. The scene under the timbered roof of the Guildhall was splendid, with great officers of the Army and Navy in full uniform, Ministers of State in court dress, Indian princes in colored turbans, foreign ambassadors glittering with stars and ribbons, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen in scarlet gowns trimmed with fur, and the royal Guest and his gentlemen in ceremonial uniforms. In the courtyard ancient coaches, all gilt and glass, with coachmen and footmen in white wigs and stockings, and liveries of scarlet and gold, brought back memories of Queen Anne's London and the pictures of Cinderella going to the ball. The gigantic and grotesque figures of Gog and Magog, carved in wood, grinned down upon the company as they have done through centuries of feasts, and at the other end of the hall, mounted in a high pulpit, a white-capped cook carved the Roast Beef of Old England, while music discoursed in the minstrels' gallery.

Our souls were warmed by 1815 port, only brought out for these royal banquets, and we sat in the midst of the illustrious and in the presence of princes, with a conviction that in no other city on earth could there be such a good setting for a good meal. There I have feasted with the ex-Kaiser, the Kings of Portugal, Italy, and Spain, several Presidents of the French Republic, and the King and Queen of England. I remember the 1815 port more than the speeches of the kings.

I also remember on one occasion at the Guildhall that it was a brother journalist who seemed to be the most popular person at the party. Admirals of the Fleet clapped him on the back and said "Hullo, Charlie!" Generals and officers beamed upon the little man and uttered the same words of surprise and affection. Diplomats and foreign correspondents who had met "dear old Charlie" in South Africa, Japan, Egypt, and the Balkans, and drunk wine with him in all the capitals of Europe, greeted

him when they passed as though they remembered rich jests in his company. It was Charles Hands of *The Daily Mail,* war correspondent, knight-errant of the pen, ironical commentator on life's puppet show, and good companion on any adventure.

I once spent an afternoon with the King of Spain and his grandees, though I had no right at all to be in their company. It was at the marriage of a prince of the House of Bourbon with a white-faced lady who had descended from the Kings of France in the old *régime.* This ceremony was to take place in an old English house at Evesham, in the orchard of England, which belonged to the Duke of Orleans, by right of blood heir to the throne of France, as might be seen by the symbol of the *fleur-de-lis* carved on every panel and imprinted on every cup and saucer in his home of exile, where he kept up a royal state and looked the part, being a very handsome man and exceedingly like Henri IV, his great ancestor.

The Duke of Orleans could not abide journalists, and strict orders were given that none should be admitted before the wedding in a pasteboard chapel, still being tacked up and painted to represent a royal and ancient chapel on the eve of the ceremony.

For fear of anarchists and journalists a considerable body of police and detectives had been engaged to hold three miles of road to Wood Norton and guard the gates. But I was under instructions to describe the preparations and the arrival of all the princes and princesses of the Bourbon blood who were assembling from many countries of Europe. With this innocent purpose, I hired a respectable-looking carriage at the livery stables of Evesham, and drove out to Wood Norton. As it happened, I fell into line with a number of other carriages containing the King and Queen of Spain and other members of the family gathering. Police and detectives accepted my

carriage as part of the procession, and I drove unchallenged through the great gilded gates under the Crown of France.

I was received with great deference by the Duke's major domo, who obviously regarded me as a Bourbon, and with the King and Queen of Spain and a group of ladies and gentlemen, I inspected the pasteboard chapel, the wedding presents, the floral decorations of the banqueting chamber, and the Duke's stables. The King of Spain was very merry and bright, and believing, no doubt, that I was one of the Duke's gentlemen, addressed various remarks to me in a courteous way. I drove back in the dark, saluted by all the policemen on the way, and wrote a description of what I had seen, to the great surprise of my friends and rivals.

Next day I attended the wedding, and saw the strange assembly of the old Blood Royal of France and Spain and Austria. One of the Bourbon princes came from some distant part of the Slav world, and, in a heavy fur coat reaching to his heels, a fur cap drawn over his ears, a gold chain round his neck, and rings, not only on all his fingers, but on his thumbs as well, looked like a bear who had robbed the jewelers' shops in Bond Street. At the wedding banquet one of the foreign noblemen drank too deeply of the flowing cup, and, upon entering his carriage afterward, danced a kind of *pas seul* and hummed a little ballad of the Paris boulevards, to the scandal of the footmen and the undisguised amusement of King Alfonso.

I made another uninvited appearance among royalty, and to this day blush at the remembrance of my audacity, which was unnecessary and unpardonable. It was when King George and Queen Mary opened the Exhibition at the White City at Shepherd's Bush, London.

They had made a preliminary inspection of the place, on a filthy day when the exhibition grounds were like

the bogs of Flanders, and when the King, with very pardonable irritation, uttered the word "Damn!" when he stepped into a puddle which splashed all over his uniform. "Hush, George!" said the Queen. "Wait till we get home!"

On the day of the opening, vast crowds had assembled in the grounds, but were not allowed to enter the exhibition buildings until the royal party had passed through. The press were kept back by a rope at the entrance way, in a position from which they could see just nothing at all. I was peeved at this lack of consideration for professional observers, and when the royal party entered and a cordon of police wheeled across the great hall to prevent the crowd from following, I stepped over the rope and joined the royal procession. As it happened, the police movement had cut off one of the party—a French Minister of State who, knowing no word of English, made futile endeavors to explain his misfortune, and received in reply a policeman's elbow in his chest and the shout of "Get back there!"

I took his place. The King's detective had counted his chickens and was satisfied that I was one of them. As I was in a new silk hat and tail coat, I looked as distinguished as a French Minister, or at least did not arouse suspicion. The only member of the party who noticed my step across the rope was Sir Edward Grey. He did not give me away, but smiled at my cool cheek with the suspicion of a wink. As a matter of fact, I was not so cool as I looked. I was in an awkward situation, because all the royal party and their company were busily engaged in conversation, with the exception of Queen Alexandra who, being deaf, lingered behind to study the show cases instead of conversing. Having no one to talk to, I naturally lingered behind also, and thus attracted the kindly notice of the Queen Mother, who made friendly remarks about the exhibition, not hearing my hesitating answers. For

the first time I saw a royal reception by great crowds from the point of view of royalty instead of the crowd—a white sea of faces, indistinguishable individually, but one big, staring, thousand-eyed face, shouting and waving all its pocket handkerchiefs, while bands played "God save the King" and cameras snapped and cinema operators turned their handles. When I returned to my office I found the news editor startled by many photographs of his correspondent walking solemnly beside Queen Alexandra. . . . The French Minister made a formal protest about his ill treatment.

King Edward was not friendly to press correspondents, especially if they tried to peep behind the scenes, but many times I used to go down to Windsor, sometimes to his garden parties, and often when the German Emperor or some other sovereign was a guest at the castle. I am sure there was more merriment in the Castle Inn where the journalists gathered than within the great old walls of the castle itself, where, curiously enough, my own father was born.

These royal visits were generally in the autumn, and the amusement of the day was a *battue* of game in Windsor Forest, in which the Prince of Wales, now King George, was always the best shot. The German Emperor was often one of the guns, but seemed to find no pleasure in that "sport"—which was a massacre of birds, and preserved an immense dignity which never relaxed. Little King Manuel, then of Portugal, shivered with cold in the dank mists of the English climate, and only King Alfonso seemed to enjoy himself, as he does in most affairs of life.

Another journey to be made once a year by a little band of descriptive writers—we were mostly always the same group—was when King Edward paid his yearly visit to the Duke of Devonshire in his great mansion at Chatsworth, in the heart of Derbyshire. Always there

was a torchlight procession up the hills from the station to the house, and the old walls of Chatsworth were illumined by fireworks which turned its fountains into fairy cascades, and the great, grim, ugly mansion into an enchanter's palace. Private theatricals were provided for the entertainment of the King—Princess Henry of Pless and Mrs. Willie James being the star turns. The performances struck me as being on the vulgar side of comedy, but King Edward's love of a good laugh was a reasonable excuse, and surely a king, more than most men, gains more wisdom from the vulgar humor of people than from the solemnities of state.

I used to be billeted in a cottage at Eversley near Chatsworth, while other members of the press put up at an old hotel kept by an old lady who had more dignity even than the Duchess. She insisted upon everybody going to bed, or turning out, at eleven o'clock, and this was a grievance to a young journalist named Holt White, then of *The Daily Mail,* who was neck and neck with me in a series of chess games. One night when we were all square on our games and walking back together to the cottage at Eversley, he said: "We must have that decisive game. Let's go back and get the chess things."

I agreed, but when we returned to the hotel, we found it in darkness and both bolted and barred. By means of a clasp knife, Holt White made a burglarious entry into the drawing-room, but unfortunately put his foot on a table laden with porcelain ornaments, and overturned it with an appalling crash. We fled. Dogs barked, bells rang, and the dignified old lady who kept the hotel put her head out of the window and screamed "Thief!" This attempted burglary was the talk of the breakfast table next morning at the Devonshire Arms, and was only eclipsed in interest by a "scoop" of Holt White's, who startled the readers of *The Daily Mail* by the awful an-

nouncement that the Duke had cut his whiskers, historic in the political caricatures of England.

I had the honor of acting as one of a bodyguard, in a very literal sense, to King Edward on the day he won the Derby. When Minoru won, a hundred thousand men broke all barricades and made a wild rush toward the Royal Stand, cheering with immense enthusiasm. According to custom, the winner had to lead in his horse, and without hesitation King Edward left the safety of his stand to come on to the course amid the seething, surging, stampeding mass of roughs. The Prince of Wales, now King George, looked very nervous, for his father's sake, and King Edward, though outwardly calm, was obviously moved to great emotion. I heard his quick little panting breaths. He was in real danger, because of the enormous pressure of the foremost mob, being pushed from behind by the tidal wave of excited humanity. The King's detective shouted and used his fists to keep the people back, as involuntarily they jostled the King. The correspondents, photographers, and others linked arms and succeeded in keeping a little air space about the King until he had led his horse safely inside.

By a curious freak of chance, I and a young colleague on the same paper—*The Daily Chronicle*—were the first people in the world, outside Buckingham Palace, to hear of the death of King Edward.

The official bulletins were grave, but not hopeless, and the last issued on the night of his death was more cheerful. All day I had been outside the Palace, writing in the rain under an umbrella, a long description of the amazing scenes which showed the depths of emotion stirred in the hearts of all classes by the thought that Edward VII was passing from England.

I believe now that beyond the hold he had on the minds of great numbers of the people because of his human qualities and the tradition of his statesmanship and "tact,"

there was an intuitive sense in the nation that after his death the peace of Europe would be gravely disturbed by some world war. I remember that thought was expressed to me by a man in the crowd who said: "After Edward—Armageddon!" It was a great, everchanging crowd made up of every condition of men and women in London —duchesses and great ladies, peers and costers, actresses, beggars, workingwomen, foreigners, politicians, parsons, shop girls, laborers, and men of leisure, all waiting and watching for the next bulletin. At eight o'clock, or thereabouts, I went into the Palace with other press men, and Lord Knollys assured us that the King was expected to pass a good night, and that no further bulletin would be issued until the following morning.

With that good news I went back to the office and prepared to go home, but the news editor said, as news editors do, "Sorry, but you'll have to spend the night at the Palace—in case of anything happening."

I was tired out, and hungry. I protested, but in vain. The only concession to me was that I should take a colleague, named Eddy, to share the vigil outside the Palace.

Eddy protested, but without more avail. Together we dined, and then decided to hire a four-wheeled cab, drive into the palace yard, and go to sleep as comfortably as possible. This idea proceeded according to plan. By favor of the police, our old cab was the only vehicle allowed inside the courtyard of the Palace, though outside was parked an immense concourse of automobiles in which great folk were spending the night.

Eddy unlaced his boots, and prepared to sleep. I paced the courtyard, smoking the last cigarette, and watching the strange picture outside.

Suddenly a royal carriage came very quietly from the inner courtyard and passed me where I stood. The lights from a high lamp-post flashed inside the carriage, and I saw the faces of those who had been the Prince of Wales

and Princess Mary. They were dead white, and their eyes were wet and shining.

I ran to the four-wheeled cab.

"Eddy!" I said, "I believe the King is dead!"

Together we hurried to the equerries' entrance of the Palace and went inside through the open door.

I spoke to one of the King's gentlemen, standing with his back to the fire, talking to an old man whom I knew to be the Belgian Minister.

"How is the King?" I asked.

He looked up at the clock, with a queer emotional smile which was not of mirth, but very sad.

"Sir," he said, in a broken voice, "King Edward died two minutes ago."

The news was confirmed by another official. Eddy and I hurried out of the Palace and ran out of the courtyard. From the Buckingham Palace Hotel I telephoned the news to *The Daily Chronicle* office. . . . The official bulletin was not posted at the gate until an hour later, but when I went home that night I held a copy of my paper which had caught the country editions, with the Life and Death of King Edward VII.

III

ON the day following the death of King Edward, I obtained permission to see him lying in his death chamber. The little room had crimson hangings, and bright sunlight streamed through the windows upon the bed where the King lay with a look of dignity and peace. I was profoundly moved by the sight of the dead King who had been so vital, so full of human stuff, so friendly and helpful in all affairs of state, and with all conditions of men who came within his ken.

In spite of the severe discipline of his youth in the austere tradition of Queen Victoria—perhaps because of that—he had broken the gloomy spell of the Victorian Court, with its Puritanical narrowing influence on the social life of the people, and had restored a happier and more liberal spirit. Truly or not, he had had, as a young Prince of Wales, the reputation of being very much of a "rip," and certain scandals among his private friends, with which his name was connected, had made many tongues wag. But he had long lived all that down when, in advanced middle age, he came to the throne, and no one brought up against him the heady indiscretions of youth.

He had played the game of kingship well and truly, with a desire for his people's peace and welfare, and had given a new glamour to the Crown which had become rather dulled and cobwebbed during the long widowhood of the old Queen. In popular imagination he was the author of the Entente Cordiale with France, which seemed to be the sole guarantee of the peace of Europe against the growing menace of Germany, though now we know

that it had other results. Anyhow, Edward VII, by some quality of character which was not based on exalted idealism but was perhaps woven with the genial wisdom of a man who had seen life in all its comedy and illusion, and had mellowed to it, stood high in the imagination of the world, and in the affection of his people. Now he lay with his scepter at his feet, asleep with all the ghosts of history.

His death chamber was disturbed by what seemed to me an outrageous invasion of vulgarity. In life King Edward had resented the click of the camera wherever he walked, but in death the cameramen had their will of him. A dozen or more of them surrounded his bed, snapping him at all angles, arranging the curtains for new effects of lights, fixing their lenses close to his dead face. There was something ghoulish in this photographic orgy about his deathbed.

The body of King Edward was removed to Westminster Hall, whose timbered roof has weathered seven centuries of English history, and there he lay in state, with four guardsmen, motionless, with reversed arms and heads bent, day and night, for nearly a week. That week was a revelation of the strange depths of emotion stirred among the people by his personality and passing. They were permitted to see him for the last time, and, without exaggeration, millions of people must have fallen into line for this glimpse of the dead King, to pay their last homage. From early morning until late night, unceasingly, there were queues of men and women of all ranks and classes, stretching away from Westminster Hall across the bridges, moving slowly forward. There was no preference for rank. Peers of the realm and ladies of quality fell into line with laboring men and women, slum folk, city folk, sporting touts, actors, women of Suburbia, ragamuffin boys, coster girls, and all manner of men who make up English life. History does not record

any such demonstration of popular homage, except one other, afterward, when the English people passed in hundreds of thousands before the grave of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey.

I saw George V proclaimed King by Garter King-at-Arms and his heralds in their emblazoned tabards, from the wall of St. James's Palace. Looking over the wall opposite, which enclosed the garden of Marlborough House, was the young Prince of Wales with his brothers and sister. That boy little guessed then that this was the beginning of a new chapter of history which would make him a captain in the greatest war of the world, where he would walk in the midst of death and see the flower of English youth cut down at his side.

At Windsor, in St. George's Chapel, I saw the burial of King Edward. His body was drawn to the Castle on a gun carriage by bluejackets, and the music of Chopin's Funeral March, that ecstasy of the spirit triumphing over death, preceded him up the castle hill. Against the gray old walls floral tributes were laid in masses from all the people, and their scent was rich and strong in the air. On the castle slopes where sunlight lay, spring flowers were blooming, as though to welcome this home-coming of the King. Kings and princes from all nations, in brilliant uniforms, crowded into St. George's Chapel, and it was a foreign King and Emperor who sorted them out, put them into their right places, acted as Master of the Ceremony, and led forward Queen Alexandra, as though he were the chief mourner, and not King George. It was the German Kaiser. The Kings of Spain and Portugal wept unaffectedly, like two schoolboys who had lost their father, and indeed, this burial of King Edward in the lovely chapel where so many of his family lie sleeping was strangely affecting, because it seemed like the passing of some historic era, and was so, though we did not know it then, certainly.

The task fell to me of describing the coronation of the new King in Westminster Abbey, and of all the great scenes of which I have been an eyewitness, this remains in my memory as the most splendid and impressive. As a lover of history, that old Abbey, which has stood as the symbol of English faith and rule since Norman days, is to me always a haunted place, filled with a myriad ghosts of the old vital past. And the coronation of an English king, in its ancient ritual, blots out modernity, and takes one back to the root sentiment of the race which is our blood and heritage. One may, in philosophical moments, think kingship an outworn institution, and jeer at all its pomp and pageantry. One's democratic soul may thrust all its ritual into the lumber room of antique furniture, but something of the old romance of its meaning, something of its warmth and color in the tapestry of English history, something of that code of chivalry and knighthood by which the King was dedicated to the service of his peoples, stirs in the most prosaic mind alive when a king is crowned again in the Abbey Church of Westminster.

The ceremony is, indeed, the old ritual of knighthood, ending with the crowning act. The arms and emblems of kingship are laid upon the altar, as when a knight kept vigil. He is stripped of his outer garments, and stands before the people, bare of all the apparel which hides his simplicity, as a common man.

There was a dramatic moment when this unclothing happened to King George. The Lord Chamberlain could not untie the bows and knots of his cloak and surcoat, and the ceremony was held up by an awkward pause. But he was a man of action, and pulling out a clasp knife from his pocket, slashed at the ribbons till they were cut. . . .

Looking down the great nave from a gallery above, I saw the long purple robes of the peers and peeresses, the rows of coronets, the little pages, like fairy-tale princes,

on the steps of the sanctuary, the Prince of Wales himself like a Childe Harold, in silk doublet and breeches, the Archbishop and Bishops, Kings-at-Arms, and officers of state, busy about the person of the King who was helpless in their hands as a victim of sacrifice, clothing him, anointing him, crowning him, before the act of homage in which all the Lords of England moved forward in their turn to swear fealty to their liege, who, in his turn, had sworn to uphold the laws and liberties of England. A cynic might scoff. But no man with an artist's eye, and no man with Chaucer and Shakespeare in his heart, could fail to see the beauty of this mediæval picture, nor fail to feel the old thrill in that heritage of ancient customs which belong to the poetry and the heart of England.

I, at least, was moved by this sentiment, being, in those days, an incurable romantic, though the war killed some of my romanticism. But even romance is not proof against the material needs of human flesh, and as the ceremony went on, hour after hour, I felt the sharp bite of hunger. We had to be in our places in the Abbey by half-past seven that morning, and keep them until three in the afternoon. I had come provided with half a dozen sandwiches, but, with a foolish trust in hungry human nature, left them for a few minutes while I walked to the end of the gallery to see another aspect of the picture below. When I came back, my sandwiches had disappeared. I strongly suspected, without positive proof, a famous lady novelist who was in the next seat to mine. It was a deplorable tragedy to me, as after the ceremony I had to write a whole page for my paper, and there was no time for food.

Among other royal events which I had to record was King George's Coronation Progress through Scotland, which was full of picturesque scenes and romantic memories. The Scottish people were eager to prove their loyalty and for hundreds of miles along the roads of

Scotland they gathered in vast cheering crowds, while all the way was guarded by Highland and Lowland troops of the Regular and Territorial Armies. For the first time I saw the fighting men of bonnie Scotland, and little dreamed then that I should see their splendid youth in the ordeal of battle, year after year, and foreign fields strewn with their bodies, as often I did, in Flanders and in France.

There were four or five correspondents, of whom I was one, allowed to travel with the King. We had one of the royal motor cars, and wherever the King drove, we followed next to his equerries and officers. It was an astonishing experience, for we were part of the royal procession and in the full tide of that immense, clamorous enthusiasm of vast and endless crowds which awaited the King's coming. Our eyes tired of the triumphal arches, floral canopies, flag-covered cities and hamlets, through which we passed, and of those turbulent waves of human faces pressing close to our carriage. Our ears wearied of the unceasing din of cheers, the noise of great multitudes, the skirl of the pipes, the distressing repetition of "God Save the King" played by innumerable brass bands, sung for hundreds of miles by the crowds, by masses of school children, by Scottish maidens of the universities, by old farmers, standing bareheaded as the King passed. We pitied any man who had to pass his life in such a way, smiling, saluting, keeping the agony of weariness out of his eyes by desperate efforts.

I am bound to say that the correspondents' car brightened up the royal procession considerably. One of our party was an Edinburgh correspondent, who has been made by nature in the image of a celebrated film actor of great fatness, with a cheery, full-moon face of benevolent aspect. The appearance of this figure immediately following the King, and so quick upon the heels of solemnity, had a devastating effect upon the crowds. They positively

yelled with laughter, believing that they recognized their "movie" favorite. Highland soldiers, with their rifles at the "present," stiff and impassive as statues, wilted, and grinned from ear to ear. Scottish lassies from the factories and farms, whose eyes had shone and cheeks flushed at the sight of the King, had a quick reaction, and shrieked with mirth.

They could not place the correspondents at all. Some thought we were "the foreign ambassadors." Others put us down as private detectives. But the most astonishing theory as to our place and dignity in the procession was uttered by an old Scottish farmer at Perth. The King had halted to receive a loyal address, and the crowd was jammed tight against our carriage. We could hear the comments of the crowd and the usual question about our identity. The old farmer gazed at us with his blue eyes beneath shaggy brows, and plucked his sandy beard.

"Eh, mon," he said, seriously, "they maun be the King's barstards."

I laughed from Perth to Stirling Castle, and back again to Edinburgh.

We dined in old castles, lunched with Scottish regiments, saw the old-time splendor of Holyrood at night, with old coaches filled with the beauty of Scottish ladies passing down the High Street where once, in these old wynds and courtyards, the nobility of Scotland lived and quarreled and fought, and where now barefoot bairns and ragged women dwell in paneled rooms in direst poverty. Again and again they sang old Jacobite songs as the King passed, forgetting his Hanoverian ancestry, and one sweet song to Bonnie Charlie—"Will ye no come back again?"—haunts me now, as I write.

With the King, we saw the great shipbuilding works on the Clyde, where thousands of riveters gathered round the King, cheering like demons, and looking rather like demons with their black faces and working overalls. The

King was admirable in his manner to all of them, and, though his fatigue must have been great, his good nature enabled him to hide it. His laughter rang out loudest when he passed under the hulk of a ship on the stocks and saw scrawled hugely in chalk upon its plates: "Good old George! We want more Beer!"

Another great scene of which I was an eyewitness was the King's Coronation Review of the British fleet at Spithead. It was a marvelous pageant of the grim and silent power of the British navy as the royal yacht passed down the long avenues of battleships and cruisers, in perfect line, enormous above the water line, terrible in the potentiality of their great guns. Every navy in the world had sent a battleship to salute the King-Admiral of the British navy. The Stars and Stripes, the Rising Sun of Japan, the long coils of the Chinese Dragon, the tricolor of France, the imperial colors of Germany, were among the flags, which included those of little nations, with a few destroyers and light cruisers as their naval strength.

All the ships were "dressed" and "manned," with sailors standing on the yard arms and along the decks, and as the King's yacht passed each ship, the royal salute was fired, and the crew cheered lustily in the echo of the guns. All but one ship, which was the *Von der Thann* of Germany. No sound of cheering came from that battleship, but the German crew maintained absolute silence. Few noticed it at the time, but I remarked it with uneasy foreboding.

I also contrasted it later with the greeting given to the Kaiser by a group of English people at Hamburg, not a year before the war, in which England and Germany devoted all their strength to each other's destruction. I was on a voyage in one of the Castle Line boats, and we put off at Hamburg to be entertained by the Mayor in his palace of the Town Hall. The Kaiser was expected, and we lined up to await his arrival. It was heralded by

the three familiar notes of his motor horn, and when he appeared there was a loud "Hip, hip, horrah!" from the English party. The Emperor acknowledged the greeting with a grim salute. He had no love for England then in his heart, and believed, I think, in that *"unvermeidlicher Krieg"*—that "unavoidable war"—which was already the text of German newspapers, though in England the warnings of a few men like Lord Roberts seemed to be the foolishness of old age, and popular imagination refused to believe in a world gone mad and tearing itself in pieces for no apparent cause.

When that war happened, I caught a glimpse, now and again, in lulls between its monstrous battles, of the man I had seen when he went weeping from the bedside of King Edward; whom I had seen bowing his head under the burden of the crown which came to him; whom I had followed in triumphant processions through his peaceful kingdom—peace seemed so lasting and secure, then—and who had come to visit his youth of the Empire, dying in heaps in defense of their race and power and tradition, as they truly believed, and as, indeed, was so, whatever the wickedness and folly that led to that massacre, on the part of statesmen of all countries who did not foresee and prevent the world conflict.

On his first visit the King was not allowed to get anywhere near the firing line, but was restricted to base areas and hospitals and convalescent camps, and distant views of the battlefields. On his second visit, he insisted upon going far forward, and would not be deterred by the generals, who, naturally, were intensely anxious for his safety.

With another war correspondent—Percival Phillips, I think—I went with the King over the Vimy Ridge where there was always, at that time, the chance of meeting a German shell, and to the top of "Whitesheet Hill," which was a very warm place indeed a few days after the battle

which captured it. The Prince of Wales was with his father, and by that time well hardened to the noise of guns and shell bursts. To the King it was all new, but he was perfectly at ease and lingered, far too long, as the generals thought, among the ruins of a convent, reduced to the size of a slag-heap, on the top of the hill looking over the German lines. As though they were aware of his visit, the Germans put down a very stiff dose of five-point-nines on the very spot where the King had been standing, but a few minutes too late, because he had just descended the slope of the hill and was examining one of the monster mine craters which we had blown at the beginning of the battle. He was there for ten minutes or so, and had hardly moved away before the Germans lengthened their range and laid down harassing fire around the crater. The King adjusted his steel hat, and laughed, while the Prince of Wales strolled about, looking rather bored.

The Prince did a real job out there, and though, as an officer on the "Q" side of the Guards, he was not supposed to go into the danger zone, he was constantly in forward places which were not what the Tommies called "health resorts." I met him one day going into Vermelles, which was a very ugly place indeed, with death on the prowl amid its ruins. He and a Divisional General left their car on the edge of the ruins while they walked forward, and, on their return, found that their poor chauffeur had had his head blown off.

Another time when the King saw a little of the "real thing" was when he visited the Guards in their camp behind the lines near Pilkem. Their headquarters were in an old monastery, and the King and the officers took tea in the garden, while the band of the Grenadiers played selections from Gilbert and Sullivan. I remember it was when they were playing "Dear Little Buttercup" that three German aëroplanes came overhead, flying very

low. To our imagination they seemed to be searching for the King, and we expected at any moment they would unload their bombs upon his tea table and his body. Our anti-aircraft guns immediately opened fire, and there was a shrieking of three-inch shells until the blue sky was all dappled with the white puffs of the "Archies." The enemy planes circled round, had a good look, and then flew away without dropping a bomb, much to our relief, for one good-sized bomb would have made a horrible mess in the Guards' camp, and might have killed the King.

That afternoon I was trapped into a little conspiracy against the King by the old abbot of the monastery. He was immensely anxious for the King to sign the visitors' book, but the officers put the old man off by various excuses. Feeling sorry for his disappointment, I promised to say a word to the King's aide-de-camp, and advised the old gentleman to intercept the King down the only path he could use on his way out, carrying the great leather book, and a pen and ink, so that there would be no escape. This little plot succeeded, to the huge delight of the abbot, and the monks who afterward gave me their united blessings.

On the King's first visit to the army in France, a most unfortunate accident happened to him, which was very painful and serious. He was reviewing part of the Air Force on a road out of Béthune, mounted on a horse which ought to have been proof against all the noise of military maneuvers. But it was too much for the animal's nerves when, at the conclusion of the review, the silent lines of men suddenly broke into deafening cheers. The horse reared three times, and the King kept his seat perfectly. But the third time, owing to the greasy mud, the horse slipped and fell sideways, rolling over the King. Generals dismounted, and ran to where he lay motionless and a little stunned. They picked him up and put him

into his motor car, where he sat back feebly, and with a look of great pain. I happened to be standing on a bank immediately opposite, and one of the King's A.D.C.'s, greatly excited, ran up to me and said: "Tell the men not to cheer!" It was impossible for me, as a war correspondent, to give any such order, and, indeed, it was too late, for when the King's car moved down the road, the other men, who had not seen the accident, cheered with immense volleys of enthusiastic noise.

The King tried to raise his hand to the salute, but had not the strength. He had been badly strained, suffered acute pain, and that night was in a high fever. On the following day I saw him taken away in an ambulance, like an ordinary casualty, and no soldiers in the little old town of Béthune knew that it was the King of England who was passing by.

Before the end of his second visit, the King received the five war correspondents who had followed the fortunes of the British Armies in France through all their great battles, and he spoke kind words to us which we were glad to hear.

IV

IN spite of my long and fairly successful career as a journalist, I have rarely achieved what is known as a "scoop," that is to say, an exclusive story of sensational interest. On the whole, I don't much believe in the editor or reporter who sets his soul on "scoops," because they create an unhealthy rivalry for sensation at any price—even that of truth—and the "faker" generally triumphs over the truthteller, until both he and the editor who encouraged him come a cropper by being found out.

That is not to say that a man should not follow an advantage to the utmost and his luck where it leads him. It is nearly always luck that is one of the essential elements in journalistic success, and sometimes, as in a game of cards, it deals a surprisingly fine hand. The skill is in making the best use of this chance and keeping one's nerve in a game of high stakes.

The only important "scoop" that I can claim, as far as I remember, was my discovery of Doctor Cook after his pretended discovery of the North Pole. That was due to a lucky sequence of events which led me by the hand from first to last. The story is amusing for that reason, and this is the first time I have written the narrative of my strange experiences in that affair.

My first stroke of luck, strange as it may seem, was my starting twenty-four hours later than forty other correspondents in search of the explorer at Copenhagen. If I had started at the same time, I should have done what they did, and perhaps taken the same line as they did. As it was, I had to play a lone hand and form my own judgment.

I had arrived at the *Daily Chronicle* office from some country place when E. A. Perris, the news editor, now the managing editor, said in a casual way:

"There's a fellow named Doctor Cook who has discovered the North Pole. He may arrive at Copenhagen to-morrow. Lots of other men have the start of you, but see if you can get some kind of a story."

I uttered the usual groan, obtained a bag of gold from the cashier, and set out for Copenhagen by way of the North Sea. On a long and tiresome journey I repeated the name "Doctor Cook," lest I should forget it, wondered if I knew anything about Arctic exploration, and decided I didn't, and accepted the probability that I should be too late to find the great explorer, and shouldn't know what to ask him if I found him.

I arrived in Copenhagen dirty, tired, and headachy in the evening. I wanted above all things a cup of strong coffee, and with the German language, communicated my desire to a taxi driver. He took me to a rather low-looking café, filled with men and women and tobacco smoke. That was my second stroke of luck, for if I had not gone to that particular café I should never have met Doctor Cook in the way that happened.

Over my cup of coffee I looked at the Danish paper, and could read only two words, "Doctor Cook." A young waiter served me, and when I found that he spoke English, I asked him if Doctor Cook, the explorer, had arrived in Copenhagen.

"No," said the waiter. "He ought to have been here at midday. But there's a fog in the Cattegat, and his boat will not come in until to-morrow morning. All Denmark is waiting for him."

So he had not arrived! Well, I might be in time, after all. I looked round for any journalist I might know, but did not see a familiar face.

Presently, as I sat smoking a cigarette, I perceived a

suddenly awakened interest among the people in the café. It was due to the arrival of a very pretty lady in a white fur toque, with a white fox-skin round her neck, accompanied by another young lady, and a tall Danish fellow with tousled hair. They took their seats at the far end of the café.

The young waiter came up to me and whispered with some excitement:

"Did you see that beautiful lady? That is Mrs. Rasmussen!"

The name meant nothing to me, and when I told him so, he was shocked.

"She's the wife of Knud Rasmussen, the famous explorer. It was he who provided Doctor Cook with his dogs before he set out for the North Pole. They are great friends."

I was aware that luck was befriending me. From that lady, if I had the pluck to speak to her, I could at least find out something about the mysterious Doctor Cook, and perhaps get a good story about him, whether I could meet him or not.

I struggled with my timidity, and then went across the café and made my bow to the pretty lady, explaining that I was a newspaper man from London, who had come all the way to interview Doctor Cook, who was, I understood, a friend of her distinguished husband. Could she tell me how to find him?

Mrs. Rasmussen who was highly educated and extremely handsome, spoke a little French, a little German, and a very little English. In a mixture of these three tongues we understood each other, helped out by the young Dane, who was Peter Freuchen, a well-known traveler in the Arctic regions, and a very good linguist.

Mrs. Rasmussen was friendly and amused. She told me it was true her husband was a great friend of Doctor Cook, and that he was the last man who had seen him

before he went toward the North Pole. For that reason she wanted to be one of the first to greet him. A launch, or tug, belonging to the director of the Danish-Greenland Company, had made ready to go down the Cattegat to meet the *Hans Egede* with Doctor Cook on board, and she had hoped to make that journey. But the fog had spoiled everything, and the launch would leave in the morning instead at a very early hour. It was very disappointing!

"Surely," I said, "if you really want to go, it would be excellent to travel to Elsinore to-night, put up at a hotel, and get on board the launch at dawn. If you would allow me to accompany you ——"

Mrs. Rasmussen laughed at my adventurous plan.

According to her, the last train had gone to Elsinore.

"Let us have a taxi and drive there!"

She told me that no motor car was allowed to drive at night beyond a certain distance from Copenhagen. It would mean a fine, or imprisonment, for the driver without special license.

It seemed incredible.

I summoned my friendly young waiter, and asked him to bring in a taxi driver. In less than a minute a burly fellow stood before me, cap in hand. Through the waiter I asked him how much he wanted to drive a party that night to Elsinore. He shook his head, and, according to the waiter, replied that he could not risk the journey, as he might be heavily fined.

"How much, including the fine?" I asked.

If he had demanded fifty pounds, I should have paid it —with *Daily Chronicle* money.

To my amazement, he asked the modest sum of five pounds, including the fine.

I turned to Mrs. Rasmussen, Peter Freuchen, and the other lady, and invited them all to make the journey in "my" motor car.

They hesitated, laughed, whispered to each other, and were, as I could see, tempted by the lure of the adventure.

"But," said Mrs. Rasmussen, "when we get there, supposing you were not allowed on the launch by the Director of the Danish-Greenland Company? He is our friend. But you are, after all, a stranger!"

"I should have had an amusing drive," I said. "It would be worth while. Perhaps you would tell me what Doctor Cook says, when you return."

They laughed again, hesitated quite a time, then accepted the invitation. It was arranged that we should start at ten o'clock, when few people would be abroad outside the city, where we should have to travel with lights out to avoid the police. There still remained an hour or so. We had dinner, talked of Doctor Cook, and at ten o'clock started out in the taxi, and I thought how incredible it was that I should be sitting there, opposite a beautiful lady with a silver fox round her throat, with a laughing girl by her side, and a young Danish explorer next to the driver, riding through Denmark with lights out, to meet a man who had discovered the North Pole, and whose name I had never heard two days before. These things happen only in journalism and romance.

We had not gone very far when, driving through a village, we knocked over a man on a bicycle. People came running up through the darkness. Peter Freuchen leaped down from his seat to pick up the man, who seemed to be uninjured, and there was a great chatter in the Danish tongue, while I kept on shouting to Freuchen, "How much to pay?" After a while he resumed his seat and said, "Nodings to pay!" So we went on again, and after a long, cold drive without further incident, reached Elsinore, where Hamlet saw his father's ghost.

At the hotel there we had something hot to drink, and then Mrs. Rasmussen caught sight of a dapper little man who was the Director of the Danish-Greenland Company

and the owner of the launch which was to meet Doctor Cook.

I was left in the background while my three companions entered into conversation with him. From the expression on their faces, I soon saw that they were disappointed, and I resigned myself to the thought that I had the poorest chance of meeting the explorer's ship at sea.

Presently Mrs. Rasmussen came back.

"He won't take us," she said.

"Hard luck!"

"But," she added, "he will take you!"

That sounded ridiculous, but it was true. The pompous little man, it seemed, had had applications from half the ladies of Copenhagen, including his own wife, perhaps, to take them on his tug to meet the hero of the North Pole. He had refused them all, in order to favor none at the expense of others. It was impossible for him to take Mrs. Rasmussen and her friends. He very much regretted that. But when they told him that I was an English journalist, he said there would be a place for me with two or three Danish correspondents.

Amazing chance! But hard on the little party I had brought to Elsinore! They were very generous about the matter, and wished me good luck when I embarked on the small tug which was to steam out to a lightship in the Cattegat and at dawn go out to meet the *Hans Egede,* as Cook's ship was called. Like a fool, I left my overcoat behind and nearly perished of cold, until an hour later I had climbed up an iron ladder to the lightship in a turbulent sea and descended into the skipper's cabin, where there was a joyous "fugg" and some hot cocoa spiced with a touch of paraffin.

At dawn we saw, far away up the Cattegat, a little ship all gay with bunting. It was the *Hans Egede.* We steamed toward it, lay alongside, and climbed to its top deck up a rope ladder. There I saw a sturdy, handsome

Anglo-Saxon-looking man, in furs, surrounded by a group of hairy and furry men, Europeans and Eskimos, and some Arctic dogs. There was no journalistic rival of mine aboard, except the young Danes with us.

I went up to the central figure, whom I guessed to be Doctor Cook, introduced myself as an English press man, shook hands with him, and congratulated him on his heroic achievement.

He took my arm in a friendly way, and said, "Come and have some breakfast, young man."

I sat next to him in the dining saloon of the *Hans Egede,* which was crowded with a strange-looking company of men and women, mostly in furs and oilskins, with their faces burned by sunlight on snow. The women were missionaries and the wives of missionaries, and their men folk wore unkempt beards.

I studied the appearance of Doctor Cook. He was not bearded, but had a well-shaven chin. He had a powerful face, with a rather heavy nose and wonderfully blue eyes. There was something queer about his eyes, I thought. They avoided a direct gaze. He seemed excited, laughed a good deal, talked volubly, and was restless with his hands, strong seaman's hands. But I liked the look of him. He seemed to me typical of Anglo-Saxon explorers, hard, simple, true.

In response to my request for his "story," he evaded a direct reply, until, later in the morning, the Danes and I pressed him to give us an hour in his cabin.

It was in the saloon, however, that he delivered himself, unwillingly, I thought, into our hands. As the two or three young Danes knew but little English, the interview became mainly a dialogue between Doctor Cook and myself. I had no suspicion of him, no faint shadow of a thought that all was not straightforward. Being vastly ignorant of Arctic exploration, I asked a number of simple questions to extract his narrative; and, to save my-

self trouble and get good "copy," I asked very soon whether he would allow me to see his diary.

To my surprise, he replied with a strange defensive look that he had no diary. His papers had been put on a yacht belonging to a man named Whitney, who would take them to New York.

"When will he get there?" I asked.

"Next year," said Doctor Cook.

"But surely," I said, still without suspicion, "you have brought your journal with you? The essential papers?"

"I have no papers," he said, and his mouth hardened.

"Perhaps I could see your astronomical observations?" I said, and was rather pleased with that suggestion.

"Haven't I told you that I have brought no papers?" he said.

He spoke with a sudden violence of anger which startled me. Then he said something which made suspicion leap into my brain.

"You believed Nansen," he said, "and Amundsen, and Sverdrup. They had only their story to tell. Why don't you believe me?"

I had believed him. But at that strange, excited protest and some uneasy, almost guilty, look about the man, I thought, "Hullo! What's wrong? This man protests too much."

From that moment I had grave doubts of him. I pressed him several times about his papers. Surely he was not coming to Europe, to claim the greatest prize of exploration, without a scrap of his notes, or any of his observations? He became more and more angry with me, until for the sake of getting some narrative from him, I abandoned that interrogation, and asked him for his personal adventures, the manner of his journey, the weights of his sledges, the number of his dogs, and so on. As I scribbled down his answers, the story appeared to me more and more fantastic. And he contradicted himself

several times, and hesitated over many of his answers, like a man building up a delicate case of self-defense. By intuition, rather than evidence, by some quick instinct of facial expression, by some sensibility to mental and moral dishonesty, I was convinced, absolutely, at the end of an hour, that this man had not been to the North Pole, but was attempting to bluff the world. I need not deal here with the points in his narrative, and the gaps he left, which served to confirm my belief. . . .

In sight of Copenhagen the *Hans Egede* was received by marvelous demonstrations of enthusiasm. The water was crowded with craft of every size and type, from steam yachts to rowing boats, tugs to pinnaces, with flags aflutter. Cheers came in gusts, unceasingly. Sirens shrieked a wailing homage, whistles blew. Bands on pleasure steamers played "See the Conquering Hero Comes."

Doctor Cook, the hero, was hiding in his cabin. He had to be almost dragged out by a tall and splendid Dane named Norman Hansen, poet and explorer, who afterward constituted himself Doctor Cook's champion and declared himself my enemy, because of my accusations against this man.

Doctor Cook came out of his cabin with a livid look, almost green. I never saw guilt and fear more clearly written on any human face. He could hardly pull himself together when the Crown Prince of Denmark boarded his ship and offered the homage of Denmark to his glorious achievement.

But that was the only time in which I saw Cook lose his nerve.

Landing on the quayside, I had to fight my way through an immense surging crowd, which almost killed the object of their adoration by the terrific pressure of their mass, in which each individual struggled to get near him. I heard afterward that W. T. Stead, the famous old

journalist of the *Review of Reviews,* which afterward I edited, flung his arms round Doctor Cook, and called upon fellow journalists to form his bodyguard, lest he should be crushed to death.

On the edge of the crowd I met the first English journalist I had seen. It was Alphonse Courlander, a very brilliant and amusing fellow, with whom I had a close friendship. When he heard that I had been on Cook's ship and had interviewed him for a couple of hours, he had a wistful look which I knew was a plea for me to impart my story. But this was one of the few times when I played a lone hand, and I ran from him, and jumped on a taxi in order to avoid the call of comradeship. I knew that I had the story of the world.

In a small hotel, distant from the center of the city, I wrote it to the extent of seven columns, and the whole of it amounted to a case of libel, making a definite challenge to Cook's claim and ridiculing the narrative which I set forth as he had told it to me. When I had handed it into the telegraph office I knew that I had burned my boats, and that my whole journalistic career would be made or marred by this message.

During the time I had been writing, Doctor Cook had been interviewed by forty journalists in one assembly. W. T. Stead, as doyen of the press, asked the questions, and at the end of the session spoke on behalf of the whole body of journalists in paying his tribute of admiration and homage to the discoverer of the North Pole. Spellbound by Stead's enthusiasm, and not having had my advantage of that experience on the *Hans Egede,* there was not a man among that forty who suggested a single word of doubt about the achievement claimed by Cook. By a supreme chance of luck, I was alone in my attack.

I will not disguise my sense of anxiety. I had a deep conviction that my judgment was right, but whether I should be able to maintain my position by direct evidence

and proof, was not so certain in my mind. I knew, next day, that my dispatch had been published by my paper, for great extracts from it were cabled back to the Danish press and they caused an immense sensation in Copenhagen, and as the days passed in an astounding fortnight, when I continued my attack by further and damning accusations against Cook, I was the subject of hostile demonstrations in the restaurants and cafés, and the Danish newspaper *Politiken* published a murderous-looking portrait of me and described me as "the liar Gibbs"—a designation which afterward they withdrew with handsome apologies.

The details of the coil of evidence I wove about the feet of Cook need not be told in full. He claimed that he had told his full story to Sverdrup, a famous explorer in Copenhagen, and that Sverdrup pledged his own honor in proof of his achievement.

Afterward I interviewed Sverdrup and obtained a statement from him that Cook had given no proof whatever of his claim.

He professed to have handed his written narrative and astronomical observations to the University of Copenhagen, and it was claimed on his behalf by the Danish press that these papers had been examined by astronomical and geographical experts who were absolutely satisfied that Cook had reached the North Pole.

From the head of the University I obtained a statement that Cook had submitted no such papers and had advanced no scientific proof.

Using his own narrative to me, which I had scribbled down as he talked, I enlisted the help of Peter Freuchen and other Arctic travelers, to analyze his statements about his distances, his sledge weights, the amount of food drawn by his dogs, and his time-table. They proved to be absurd, and when he contradicted himself to other interviewers, I was able, with further expert advice, to

contradict his contradictions. It was a great game, which I thoroughly enjoyed, though I worked day and night, with only snatches of rest for food and sleep.

But I had some nasty moments.

One was when a statement was published in every newspaper of the world that the Rector of the Copenhagen University had flatly denied my interview with him and reiterated his satisfaction with the proofs submitted by Doctor Cook.

The Daily Chronicle telegraphed this denial to me and said, "Please explain."

I remember receiving that telegram shortly after reading the same denial in the Danish newspapers, brought to me by Mr. Oscar Hansen, the Danish correspondent of my own paper, who was immensely helpful to me. I was thunderstruck and dismayed, for if the Rector of the University denied what he had told me, and maintained a belief in the *bona fides* of Cook, I was utterly undone.

At that moment W. T. Stead approached me and put his hand on my shoulder. He, too—still the ardent champion of Cook—had read that denial.

"Young man," he cried, in his sonorous voice, "you have not only ruined yourself, which does not matter very much, but you have also ruined *The Daily Chronicle,* for which I have a great esteem."

"Mr. Stead," I said, "I am a young and obscure man, compared with you, and I appeal to your chivalry. Will you come with me to the Rector of Copenhagen University and act as my witness to the questions I shall put to him, and to the answers he gives?"

"By all means," he said, "and to make things quite beyond doubt, we will take two other witnesses—the correspondent who issued the statement about the denial, and another of established character."

The two other witnesses were a French count, acting as the correspondent of a great French newspaper and

the representative of a news agency who had issued the university statement, and believed in its truth.

It was a strange and exciting interview with that Rector. For a long time he refused to open his lips to say a single word one way or the other about the Cook case. He relented slowly when W. T. Stead made an eloquent plea on my behalf, and said that my honor was at stake on his word.

The correspondent who had published the denial of my interview tried to intervene, speaking in rapid German which I could hardly follow, endeavoring to persuade the Rector to uphold the statement issued with regard to the University. But the Frenchman, acting as my second, as it were, sternly bade him speak in English or French which all could understand, and to give me the right of putting my questions. This was upheld by Stead.

I put my questions exactly word for word as I had done in the first interview.

Had Doctor Cook submitted any journal of his travels to the University?

Had he submitted any astronomical observations?

Had he presented any proof at all of his claim to have reached the Pole?

The Rector hesitated long before answering each question in the negative. The man was profoundly disturbed. Undoubtedly, as I knew later, the University, with the King as its President, had deeply involved itself by offering an honorary degree to Cook. As its chief representative, this man was in a difficult and dangerous position, if he turned down Cook's claim. It was at least five minutes before he answered the last question. Then, as an honest man, he answered, as he had done before when I saw him alone, "No!"

I breathed a deep sigh of relief. If he had been a dishonest man, my reputation and career would have been utterly ruined.

I asked him to sign the questions and answers as I had written them down, but for a long time he refused to put his signature. Then he signed, but as he handed me the paper, he said: "Of course that must not be published in the newspapers."

I protested that in that case it was useless, and both Stead and the French correspondent argued on my behalf. I had the paper in my breast pocket, and when the Rector gave a timorous consent to its publication, I left the room with deep words of thanks, and fairly ran out of the gate of the University lest he should change his mind, or the paper should be taken from me. It was published in *The Daily Chronicle,* and in hundreds of other papers.

A second blow befell me.

I had resumed acquaintanceship with Peter Freuchen and Mrs. Rasmussen, and at lunch one day she showed me a long letter which she had received from her husband, the explorer who, as I have told, had been Cook's best friend, and had provided his dogs and Eskimos.

Mrs. Rasmussen, smiling, said: "You, of all men, would like to read that letter."

"Alas that I do not know Danish!" I answered.

She marked one paragraph with a pencil, and said, "Perhaps I will let you copy out those words."

It was Peter Freuchen who copied out the words in Danish, and Oscar Hansen who translated them into English, on a bit of paper which I tore out of my notebook.

They were a repudiation by Knud Rasmussen of his faith in Cook, and a direct suggestion that he was a knave and a liar.

These words were, of course, vitally interesting to me, and, indeed, to the world, for the fame and honor of Rasmussen were high, and his name had been used as the best guarantee of Cook's claim. With Mrs. Rasmussen's permission, I telegraphed her husband's words

in my message that day. They were immediately reproduced in all the Danish papers, and made a new sensation.

But my private sensation was far more emotional when, in crossing a square the following evening, a Danish journalist showed me a paper and said, "Have you seen this?"

It was a formal denial by Mrs. Rasmussen that she had ever shown me a letter from her husband, or that he had ever written the words I had published.

That was a severe shock to me. I could not understand it, or indeed believe it. That very day Peter Freuchen and Mrs. Rasmussen had been my guests at lunch, and as friendly as possible. Probably some malicious journalist had invented the letter. . . .

It was late at night, and I could not find either Peter Freuchen or Mrs. Rasmussen, nor did I ever see the lady again, because, on account of certain high influences, she disappeared from Copenhagen.

I remembered the bit of paper on which the words had been written down in Danish by Peter Freuchen and translated into English by Oscar Hansen. That document was very precious, and my only proof, but I couldn't find it in my pockets or my room. My room at the hotel was a wreck of papers, but that one scrap evaded all search. At last, down on my hands and knees, I found it screwed up under the bed, and gave a cry of triumph.

My old friend and true comrade, Oscar Hansen, made an affidavit that he had translated Freuchen's words, the editor of a news agency swore to Freuchen's handwriting, and I issued an invitation to Mrs. Rasmussen to submit her husband's letter to a committee of six, half appointed by herself and half by me. If they denied that the letter contained the words I had published, I would pay a certain heavy sum, which I named, to Danish charities. That invitation was not accepted, and my words were believed.

I have already described in a previous column of these memories the banquet to Doctor Cook which I attended

in the dress clothes of my young friend the waiter. It was an historic evening, for, in the middle of that dinner came the famous message from Peary in which he announced his own arrival at the Pole and repudiated Cook's claim.

I stood close to Doctor Cook when that message was handed to him, and I am bound to pay a tribute to his cool nerve. He read the message on the bit of flimsy, handed it back, and said, "If Peary says he reached the Pole, I believe him!"

His manner at all times, after that temporary breakdown on the *Hans Egede* was convincing. It was marvelous on the day when the doctor's degree—the highest honor of the University—was conferred upon him, and before all the learned men there he ascended the pulpit of the University chapel and in a solemn oration stretched out his arms and said, "I show you my hands—they are clean!"

At that moment I was tempted to believe that Cook believed he had been to the North Pole. Sometimes, remembering the manner of the man, I am tempted to think so still—though now there is no doubt that he never went anywhere near his goal.

I used to meet him on neutral ground at the American Minister's house in Copenhagen, where I handed round Miss Egan's tea cakes. Doctor Cook would never accept any cake from me! Maurice Egan, the Minister, was immensely courteous and kind, and Miss Egan confided to me that if I proved to be right about Doctor Cook, in whom she believed, she would lose her faith in human nature. Since then, though I was proved right, she has regained her faith in human nature, as I know from her happy marriage in the United States.

One other slight shock disturbed my mental poise in this fortnight of sensation. It was when I read in the *Politiken* a challenge to a duel, publicly addressed to me

by Norman Hansen, the poet and explorer. He was a tall man, six foot three or so in his socks, and very powerful. I am five-foot-six or so in my boots. If we met, I should die. I did not answer that challenge! But on the day when Doctor Cook left Copenhagen, with a wreath of roses round his bowler hat, and when I had done my job with him, the crowd which had gone down to the quayside to see the last of him, parted, and I found myself face to face with Norman Hansen.

Some one in the crowd said:

"When is that duel to be fought?"

Norman Hansen came toward me, and held out his hand, with a great jolly laugh.

"We will never fight with the sword," he said, "but only with the pen!"

We didn't even fight with the pen, for he lost all faith in Cook, and sometimes from northern altitudes I get kind and generous messages from him.

W. T. Stead maintained his belief in Cook until the University of Copenhagen formally rejected Cook's claim and canceled his honorary degree, when the evidence of his own papers, which afterward arrived, and the story of his own Eskimos, left no shred of doubt in his favor.

Then I had a note from the great old journalist.

"I have lost and you have won," he wrote, and after that used generous words which I need not publish.

Truly it was a queer, exciting incident in my journalistic life, and looking back upon it, I marvel at my luck.

V

BY a young journalist, or an old one, there is always an adventure to be found in London, as in any great city of the world where the passions of men and women, the conflict of life, the heroism and crimes of human nature, its dreams, its madness, and its faith, are but thinly masked behind the commonplace aspect of modern streets, and beneath the drab cloak of dullness of modern civilization.

It was my hobby in those early Fleet Street days to explore the underworld of London and to get behind the scenes of its monstrous puppet show. I sought out the queer characters not yet "standardized" by the discipline of compulsory education or the conventions of middle-class manners.

I dived into the foreign quarters of London and found that most nations of Europe, and the races of the East, had their special sanctuaries in the great old city, in which they preserved their own speech and habits and faith.

In the Russian quarter I met victims of the tyranny of Czardom, who had escaped from Siberian prisons and still bore the marks of their chains and lashes; and the Russian Jews, too, who had come to England to save themselves from the pogroms of Riga and other cities. I found many of them working as tailors and seamstresses in back rooms of tenement houses, Whitechapel way, abominably overcrowded, but earning high wages. It was a revelation to me that they did most of the "black" work for great West End firms, so that Mayfair received its garments from the East End, with any diseases that might be carried with them from those fœtid little fac-

tories. Thousands of them were employed in cigarette factories, and spent their days filling little spills of paper with the yellow weed, incredibly fast. According to the tradition of not muzzling the ox that treads the corn, they were allowed to smoke as much as they liked, and both men and women smoked continually.

I made a study of German London, which, at that time, before something happened like an earthquake, had as many German clubs as any good-sized city of the Fatherland, and several German churches, workers' unions, theatrical and musical societies.

In Soho I poked about French London, lunched at the *Petit Riche* or dined at the Gourmet, and between Wardour Street and Old Compton Street met the French girls who made artificial flowers for the ballets and pantomimes, silk tights for the fairies of the footlights, and embroidered shoes which twinkled on the boards.

Italy in London was one of my earliest discoveries as a young writer in search of the picturesque. It was but a ten minutes' walk from my first office, and often in lunch time I used to saunter that way, stopping to listen to the English cheap-Jacks in Leather Lane, on the other side of Holborn, and then plunging into a labyrinth of narrow lanes and courtyards entirely inhabited by Italians.

It was a little Naples, in its color, its smells, its dirt. Across the courtyards Italian women stretched their "washing"; and blue petticoats and scarlet bodices, and silk scarves for women's hair gave vivid color to these London alleys. The women, as beautiful as Raphael's Madonnas, sang at their washtubs, surrounded by swarms of *bambini.*

Here, under a baker's shop kept by an Italian *padrone,* slept o' nights the little organ grinders and hurdy-gurdy boys, who used to wander through the London suburbs and far into the countryside, to the delight of English nurseries from which coppers were flung down to these

grubby, dark-eyed urchins with little shivering monkeys in their coat pockets or on their music boxes. They were the slaves of the *padrone* and had to bring him all their earnings and get beaten if they did not bring enough, before they slept in the cellars of this London slum, among the black beetles and the rats.

In one back yard lived a gray bear, belonging to two wanderers from the mountains of Savoy, and I used to hear the rattle of his chains before they led him out on his hind legs with a big pole between his paws.

Above a big yard crowded with piano organs sat, in a little room at the top of a high ladder, a fat old Italian who put the music on the streets. He sat before an open organ case with a roll of cartridge paper into which he stabbed little holes, which afterward made the notes played by a spiked cylinder when the organ grinder turned his handle. It was he who selected the tunes, thus conferring immortality on many poor devils of musicians who heard their melodies whistled by the errand boys to this music of the streets, and became famous thereby. But it was the fat old Italian at the top of the tall ladder who was the interpreter of their genius to the popular ear of the great public of the streets and slums. He put in the trills, and the "twiddley bits," stabbing with his brad-awl on the cartridge roll, as though inspired by the divine afflatus, while his hair, above a massive face and three chins, was all curls and corkscrews, as though crotchets, and quavers, semiquavers, and demi-semiquavers, arpeggios and chromatics were thrusting through his brain.

In other yards were men all white from head to heel, who made the plaster casts of Napoleon and Nelson, Queen Victoria and General Gordon, Venus and Mercury, and other favorite characters of history, sold by hawkers in Ludgate Hill and other haunts of high art at low prices. They also made the casts of classical figures for art schools and museums.

In the back yards, the basements and the slum kitchens was another profitable form of industry which was a monopoly of Italians in London in the pre-war days. That was the ice cream trundled through the streets with that alluring call to youth, "Hokey-pokey penny a lump!" From surroundings appallingly free from sanitary supervision came this nectar and ambrosia which the urchins of the London streets found an irresistible temptation.

It was a careless word on the subject of this lack of sanitation in the ice-cream factories which nearly ended my career as a journalist before it was fairly begun. Requiring some additional photographs for the second instalment of some articles I was writing for a magazine —the first, almost, that I ever wrote—I went one Sunday morning to Italy in London with an amateur photographer. We went into one of the courtyards where I had made friends with some of the pretty washerwomen, but I was no sooner observed by a few of them than, as though by magic, the courtyard was filled with a considerable crowd of those whom the Americans call "Wops."

They came up from the basements where they slept as many as forty in a cellar—organ grinders, ice-cream vendors, bear leaders, waiters. I was obviously the object of passionate dislike. They surrounded me with violent gestures and torrential speech, not one word of which did I understand. At first I was mildly curious to know what all this noise was about, but I saw that things were serious when several young men began to flash about their clasp-knives. Help came at a critical moment. Three London "Bobbies" appeared on the scene, as they generally do, in the nick of time.

"Now, what's all this about?"

Seldom before had I heard such a friendly and comforting inquiry.

The crowd melted away. In the quietude that fol-

lowed, one young waiter who remained explained to me that my published article on the Italian quarter had caused great offense, as my reference to the ice-cream factories had been taken as an insult. I had used the phrase "dirty places" and the Italian colony desired my death. They did not get it that Sunday morning. But I was sorry to have hurt their feelings, as I had an affectionate regard for those people.

I was abominably near a nasty accident, owing to a misplaced sense of humor, when the Mohammedans in London celebrated the Feast of Ramadan, as they do each year at the Holborn Restaurant. That is one of the most unlikely places in which to meet Romance. On all the other days of the year it is given over to public banquets of Odd Fellows and Good Fellows, Masons, and Rotarians, and the business man of London when he puts on a hard white shirt, and expands his manly bosom under the influence of comradeship, and the sense of holding an honorable place among his fellow men of the same social grade as himself. Yet, in the Holborn Restaurant there is the mystery and the romance of the East, an astonishing, and almost incredible, assembly of Oriental types, on that day of Mohammedan rejoicing.

The first time I went, there were several Indian princes in richly colored turbans and gold-embroidered coats, some Persians in white robes, Turks wearing the scarlet fez, a number of Arabs, some full-blooded African negroes, and a group of Indian students. White tablecloths, used as a rule by business men at their banquets, were spread on the floor, and these were used as kneeling mats by the Mohammedans, who bowed to the East with their foreheads touching the ground and joined in a chant, rising and falling in the Oriental scale, with strange wailings, as one among them read extracts from the Koran, and between whiles seemed to carry on a musical and melancholy conversation with the Faithful.

My trouble was that I wanted to laugh. There was nothing to laugh at, and much to admire in the intense faith of these Mohammedan worshipers, but there are times, probably due to nervousness, when some little demon tickles one into a desperate desire to relieve one's emotion by mirth. It is what schoolgirls call "the giggles." I caught the eye of an enormous negro, staring at me ferociously, and I failed to hide a fatuous smile. It was the queer nasal lamentations of those kneeling men, and this scene in the Holborn Restaurant, where I had dined the very night before with business men in boiled shirts, which stirred my sense of the ridiculous, against all my spirit of reverence and decency. I was alarmed at myself, and hurriedly left the room.

Outside the door I leaned against the wall and laughed with my handkerchief to my mouth, because of this Arabian Nights' dream in the ridiculous commonplace of the Holborn Restaurant. As I did so, the tall negro who had been eying me appeared suddenly before me in the darkness of the passage. His eyes seemed to blaze with rage, and all the wrath of Islam was in him, and he crouched a little as though to make a spring at me. My misplaced sense of humor left me immediately! I was out of the Holborn Restaurant and on top of a 'bus bound for Oxford Circus, with astonishing rapidity.

It was not only among the foreigners of London that I found strange scenes and odd characters. The life of a journalist brings him into touch with the eccentricities of human nature, and trains him to keep his eyes open for rare birds, philosophers in back streets, odd volumes in the bookshelf.

It was by accident that I discovered a very queer fellow who revealed to me a romantic profession. I was calling on a Member of Parliament in the old Queen Anne house behind Westminster Abbey, when I saw a

smart gig standing by the pavement, a well-dressed young man with a clean-shaven face, long nose, and green eyes, and, up against the wall, a sack. It was the sack which astonished me. Filled with some bulky-looking material, it was not like an ordinary sack, but was heaving in a most peculiar way. I ventured to address the young man with the gig.

"What on earth's the matter with that sack?"

He grinned, and said, "Want to know?"

Then, very cautiously, he opened the mouth of the sack, made a sharp nip with forefinger and thumb, and brought out a big-sized rat.

"There are four hundred in that bag," he remarked proudly, "and all alive and kicking. One has to handle 'em carefully. They bite like blazes."

"What are they for?" I asked. "What are you going to do with them?"

"Sell 'em to fancy gents who like a little sport with their dogs on Sunday, down Mitcham way. Care to have my card?"

He handed me a visiting card, and I read the inscription, which notified that my new acquaintance was

"Rat Catcher to the Lord Mayor and the City of London."

I made an appointment with this dignitary, and found that he was the modern Pied Piper, who spent his nights in luring the rats of London from riverside warehouses, city restaurants, and other establishments along the bed of the Thames where they swarmed by the thousand.

"Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens. . . ."

Every night when the city folk had left their chop-houses or their warehouses, this mysterious fellow with the greenish eyes went in quietly with four big wire cages, some netting, and a long willow wand. The nets, which had pouched pockets, he put up against the passages and doorways. Then, in the absolute darkness, he stood motionless for an hour. Presently there came a patter of tiny feet, a squeaking, a glint of ravenous little eyes. They were all round him, searching for the crumbs, ravenously. Suddenly he uttered a strange beastlike cry, in his throat, like yodeling, and whipped the floor with his long white wand. The rats were mesmerized, stupefied. They tried to make their way back to their holes, but fell into the poacher's nets, dozens and scores, on a good hunting night. He emptied them into the cages, covered them with white cloths, stood motionless again, waited again, made a second bag. At dawn he departed with his sack well loaded, to sell to "fancy gents" at fourpence each, in the suburbs of London.

The foreign element in London was, on the whole, very law abiding. For centuries London had been the sanctuary of political refugees from many countries of persecution, and it was a tradition, and a good tradition, of England, that no questions should be asked as to the political faith of those who desired shelter from their own rulers. Even the revolutionaries of Europe, and the "intellectual" anarchists, had the good sense, for a long time, not to stir up trouble or attack the laws of the land in which they found such generous exile. This rule, however, was abruptly broken by a gang of foreign bandits who carried out a series of alarming robberies, and, when tracked down at last, shot a police inspector and wounded others.

One of their own men was mortally wounded in the affray and carried bleeding to a house in Grove Street, Whitechapel, one of the worst streets in London, where

he died. He was a young Russian, as handsome as a Greek god, in the opinion of the surgeons of the London Hospital, with whom I happened to be lunching when one of the juniors rushed in with the news that the corpse had been secured, against all competitors, by the "London."

It was the death of this Russian which gave the clue to the habits and whereabouts of the gang with whom he had been connected. Their women were caught, and "blew the gaff," and it was discovered that the leader of the gang was another young Russian called Peter the Painter. Scores of Scotland Yard detectives set out on the trail, and another police inspector lost his life in the endeavor to arrest three of the bandits at a house in Sidney Street, Whitechapel, where they defied all attempts at capture by a ruthless use of automatic pistols. Siege was laid to the house by the police and detectives, armed with revolvers, and an astounding episode happened in the heart of London.

For some reason, which I have forgotten, I went very early that morning to the *Chronicle* office, and was greeted by the news editor with the statement that a hell of a battle was raging in Sidney Street. He advised me to go and look at it.

I took a taxi, and drove to the corner of that street, where I found a dense crowd observing the affair as far as they dared peer round the angle of the walls from adjoining streets. Heedless at the moment of danger, which seemed to me ridiculous, I stood boldly opposite Sidney Street and looked down its length of houses. Immediately in front of me four soldiers of one of the Guards' regiments lay on their stomachs, protected from the dirt of the road by newspaper "sandwich" boards, firing their rifles at a house halfway down the street. Another young Guardsman, leaning against a wall, took random shots at intervals while he smoked a woodbine. As I stood near him, he winked and said, "What a game!"

It was something more than a game. Bullets were flicking off the wall like peas, plugging holes into the dirty yellow brick, and ricocheting fantastically. One of them took a neat chip out of a policeman's helmet, and he said, "Well, I'll be blowed!" and laughed in a foolish way. It was before the war, when we learned to know more about the meaning of bullets. Another struck a stick on which a journalistic friend of mine was leaning in an easy, graceful way. His support and his dignity suddenly departed from him.

"That's funny!" he said, seriously, as he saw his stick neatly cut in half at his feet.

A cinematograph operator, standing well inside Sidney Street, was winding his handle vigorously, quite oblivious of the whiz of bullets which were being fired at a slanting angle from the house, which seemed to be the target of the prostrate Guardsmen.

A large police inspector, of high authority, shouted a command to his men.

"What's all that nonsense? Clear the people back! Clear 'em right back! We don't want a lot of silly corpses lying round."

A cordon of police pushed back the dense crowd, treading on the toes of those who would not move fast enough.

I found myself in a group of journalists.

"Get back there!" shouted the police.

But we were determined to see the drama out. It was more sensational than any "movie" show. Immediately opposite was a tall gin palace—"The Rising Sun." Some strategist said, "That's the place for us!" We raced across before the police could outflank us.

A Jew publican stood in the doorway, sullenly.

"Whatcher want?" he asked.

"Your roof," said one of the journalists.

"A quid each, and worth it," said the Jew.

At that time, before the era of paper money, some of us

carried golden sovereigns in our pockets, one to a "quid." Most of the others did, but, as usual, I had not more than eighteenpence. A friend lent me the necessary coin, which the Jew slipped into his pocket as he let me pass. Twenty of us, at least, gained access to the roof of "The Rising Sun."

It was a good vantage point, or O.P., as we should have called it later in history. It looked right across to the house in Sidney Street in which Peter the Painter and his friends were defending themselves to the death—a tall, thin house of three stories, with dirty window blinds. In the house immediately opposite were some more Guardsmen, with pillows and mattresses stuffed into the windows in the nature of sandbags as used in trench warfare. We could not see the soldiers, but we could see the effect of their intermittent fire, which had smashed every pane of glass and kept chipping off bits of brick in the anarchists' abode.

The street had been cleared of all onlookers, but a group of detectives slunk along the walls on the anarchists' side of the street at such an angle that they were safe from the slanting fire of the enemy. They had to keep very close to the wall, because Peter and his pals were dead shots and maintained something like a barrage fire with their automatics. Any detective or policeman who showed himself would have been sniped in a second, and these men were out to kill.

The thing became a bore as I watched it for an hour or more, during which time Mr. Winston Churchill, who was then Home Secretary, came to take command of active operations, thereby causing an immense amount of ridicule in next day's papers. With a bowler hat pushed firmly down on his bulging brow, and one hand in his breast pocket, like Napoleon on the field of battle, he peered round the corner of the street, and afterward, as we learned, ordered up some field guns to blow the house to bits.

That never happened, for a reason which we on "The Rising Sun" were quick to see.

In the top-floor room of the anarchists' house we observed a gas jet burning, and presently some of us noticed the white ash of burnt paper fluttering out of a chimney pot.

"They're burning documents," said one of my friends.

They were burning more than that. They were setting fire to the house, upstairs and downstairs. The window curtains were first to catch alight, then volumes of black smoke, through which little tongues of flame licked up, poured through the empty window frames. They must have used paraffin to help the progress of the fire, for the whole house was burning with amazing rapidity.

"Did you ever see such a game in London!" exclaimed the man next to me on the roof of the public house.

For a moment I thought I saw one of the murderers standing on the window sill. But it was a blackened curtain which suddenly blew outside the window frame and dangled on the sill.

A moment later I had one quick glimpse of a man's arm with a pistol in his hand. He fired and there was a quick flash. At the same moment a volley of shots rang out from the Guardsmen opposite. It is certain that they killed the man who had shown himself, for afterward they found his body (or a bit of it) with a bullet through the skull. It was not long afterward that the roof fell in with an upward rush of flame and sparks. The inside of the house from top to bottom was a furnace.

The detectives, with revolvers ready, now advanced in Indian file. One of them ran forward and kicked at the front door. It fell in, and a sheet of flame leaped out. . . . No other shot was fired from within. Peter the Painter and his fellow bandits were charred cinders in the bonfire they had made.

So ended the "Battle of Sidney Street," which created

intense excitement and indignation throughout England, and threw a glare of publicity on to the secret haunts of the foreign anarchists in London.

I was one of those who directed the searchlight, for the very next day, with Eddy, my colleague, I took up residence at 62 Sidney Street, and explored the underworld of Whitechapel and the Anarchist clubs of the Russian and German Jews, who were the leading spirits of a philosophy which is now known as Bolshevism. And in that quest I had some strange adventures, and met some very queer folk.

VI

BEFORE taking lodgings in Sidney Street, Whitechapel, to study the haunts of Peter the Painter and his fellow "thugs," I tried to get a room in the house in Grove Street to which the handsome young Russian had been carried when he was mortally wounded by the police.

With my companion Eddy, I knocked at the door of this dark little dwelling place, in a sinister street with a railed sidewalk, where foreign-looking men lounged about in doorways, and young drabs with painted faces started out at dusk for the lighted highways. Eddy and I believed ourselves to be disguised adequately for East End life. We had put on our oldest clothes and cloth caps, but we were both aware that our appearance in Grove Street aroused immediate suspicion. After three knocks, the door was opened on a chain, and a frowsy woman spoke to me in Yiddish. I answered in German, which she seemed to understand. Upon my asking for a room, she undid the chain and opened the door a little way, so that I could see the crooked wooden stairs up which the man's body had been carried by two of those men who now lay burned to death in Sidney Street.

The woman asked us to wait, and then went down a stinking passage and spoke to a man, as I could hear by the voices. While we waited, shadows crept up out of the dark street about us, and I saw that we were surrounded by the foreign-looking men who had been lounging in the doorways. The woman came back with a tall, bearded man who spoke English.

"What do you want?"

"A room for the night."

"What the hell for?" he asked. "Do you know there's been a murder in this house?"

"That makes no difference," I said, casually. "It's late and raining, and we want to sleep."

"Not here. We don't want no narks in this house. We're honest people."

"All right," said Eddy. "We'll go somewhere else."

He was moving off, when the man took hold of his arm.

"Perhaps you won't," he snarled. "I may get into trouble about this, with the cops. You'll stay here till I send a word round to the station."

He gave a whistle, and the men lurking in the darkness about us pressed closer. They were young Jews of Russian type, anæmic and white-faced.

He shoved the man off, and pushed his way through the crowd. They jabbered in a foreign tongue, and followed a little way, but did not touch us.

"Let go of my arm, or I'll hit you," said Eddy.

The rain fell faster, and we were splashed with mud. With good warm houses in the West of London, it was ridiculous to be tramping about the East like this, homeless and cold. We knocked at many doors in other streets, and every answer we had was a rough refusal in Yiddish or German to take us in. Not even when we offered as much as a sovereign for a night's shelter.

"These people don't like the look of us," said Eddy. "What's the matter with our money?"

The truth was, I think, that the affair in Sidney Street had thoroughly scared the foreign element in the East End, and these people to whom we applied for rooms were on their guard at once against two strangers who might be police spies or criminals in search of a hiding place. They were not accepting trouble either way.

It was late at night when at last we persuaded an Israelite, and master tailor, to rent us a room in Sidney

Street, next door to the house in which Peter the Painter and his friends had defied the armed police of London, and escaped capture by dying in the flames.

From that address Eddy and I wrote a series of articles describing our experiences in the East End, among anarchists, criminals, and costers. The anarchists were the most interesting, and we visited them in their night clubs.

We went, I remember, to a Russian hotel in Whitechapel, where the chief anarchist club in London had established its headquarters through fear of a police raid at its old address. Certainly they took no precautions to ensure secrecy, for even outside the hotel, down a side street, Eddy and I could hear the stentorian voice of one of their orators, and see the shadows of his audience on the window blinds. We went into the hotel and found the stairs leading to the club room densely packed by young men and women, for the most part respectably, and even smartly, dressed, of obviously foreign race—Russian, German, and Jewish.

Eddy and I wormed our way upstairs by slow degrees, sufficiently close to hear the long, excited speech that was being made in German. Here and there at least I heard snatches of it, and such phrases as "the tyranny of the police," "the fear of the *bourgeoisie*," "the dictatorship of the people," "the liberty of speech," and "the rights of labor to absolute self-government." Such phrases as these were loudly applauded whenever the speaker paused.

"Who is speaking?" I asked of a good-looking young fellow sitting on the stairs.

He answered sullenly:

"Rocca. What's that to you?"

Presently there was a whispering about us. Sullen faces under bowler hats held close consultation. Then there was a movement on the stairs, jamming Eddy and myself against the banisters.

"What do you want here?" asked one of the young men, aggressively. "If you're police narks, we'll turn you out!"

"Yes, or do you in!" said another.

"We don't want any bleeding spies here," said a woman.

Other expressions of hostility were uttered, and there was an ugly look on the faces of these foreign youths.

I thought it best to tell them frankly that I was merely a newspaper reporter on *The Daily Chronicle,* finding a little descriptive material. I should be interested to hear the speech upstairs, if they had no objection.

This candor disarmed them, or most of them, though a few raised the cry of "Turn them out!"

But an elderly man who seemed to have some authority raised his hand, and took me under his protection.

"That's all right. We've nothing to hide. If *The Daily Chronicle* wants our views, it can have them. Better come and see Mrs. Rocca."

The crowd made way for us on the stairs and my companion and I were led to a narrow landing outside the room, where the orator still bellowed in German to a packed audience, and then into a little slip of a room which I found to be an ordinary bathroom.

On the edge of the bath sat a well-dressed, rather good-looking and pleasant-eyed lady, to whom I was introduced, and who was introduced to me as Mrs. Rocca. She was the wife of the orator in the next room, and, like himself, German.

She spoke English perfectly, and in the presence of half a dozen men who crowded in to listen, we had an argument lasting at least an hour, on the subject of anarchy. She began by disclaiming, for the anarchists in London, all knowledge of and responsibility for the affair of Peter the Painter and his associates. They were merely common thieves. But it was laughable, she

thought, what a panic fear had been caused in middle-class London by the killing of a policeman or two. It filled columns of the newspapers, with enormous headlines. It seemed to startle them as something too horrible and monstrous for imagination. Why all that agitation over the deaths of two guardians of property, when there was no agitation at all, no public outcry, no fierce clamor for vengeance, because every night men and women of the toiling classes were being killed by the inhuman conditions of their lives, in foul slums, in overcrowded bedrooms, in poisonous trades, in sweated industries, as the helpless slaves of that capitalistic system which protected itself by armies of police. The English people were the world's worst hypocrites. They hid a putrid mass of suffering, corruption, and disease, caused by modern industrialism, and pretended that it did not exist.

"What is your philosophy?" I asked. "How do you propose to remedy our present state?"

"I am an intellectual Nihilist," said the lady very calmly. "I believe in the ultimate abolition of all law, all government, all police, and in a free society with perfect liberty to the individual, educated in self-discipline, love for others, and moral purpose."

I need not here repeat her arguments, nor their fantastic disregard of human nature and the stark realities of life. She was well read, and quoted all manner of writers from Plato to Bernard Shaw, and I marveled that such a woman should be living in the squalor of Whitechapel as a preacher of the destructive gospel. We had a vehement argument, in which Eddy joined, and though we waxed hot, and disagreed with each other on all issues, we maintained the courtesies of debate, in which, beyond any mock modesty, I was hopelessly outargued by this brilliant, extraordinary, and dangerous woman.

It was from acquaintances made in that club that we were led into other byways of Whitechapel and heard strange and terrible tales of Russian revolutionaries, who showed me the sores of fetters and chains about their wrists and legs, and swore eternal hatred of the Russian Czardom, which crushed the souls of men and women and tortured their bodies. They were, doubtless, true tales, and it was with the remembrance of those horrors that the Russian Revolution was made, in all its cruelty and terror, until the autocracy of the Czars was replaced by the tryanny of Lenin and the Soviet State, when the dream of Russian liberty was killed, for a generation at least, in the ruin and famine and pestilence of the people.

Eddy and I dined in the kosher restaurants of the East End, went to the Jewish theater, and explored the haunts of the Russian and Oriental Jews of London.

In our wanderings we discovered the most Oriental place this side of Constantinople. It was Hessell Street Market, in a deep sunken road, reached by flights of steep steps through blocks of buildings in the Commercial Road, and quite unknown to most Londoners. On each side of the sunken street were wooden booths which looked as though they had been there since the time of Queen Elizabeth, and at night, when we went, they were lit, luridly, by naptha flares. In these booths sat, cross-legged, old bearded men with hooked noses, who looked as though they were contemporaries of Moses and the Prophets. They were selling cheap Oriental rugs, colored cottons and silks, sham jewelery, rabbit skins, kosher meat, skinny fowls, and embroidered slippers. The crowd marketing in this place, chaffering, quarreling, picking over the wares, with the noise of a Turkish bazaar, were mostly of Oriental types. Some of the men wore fur caps, or astrakhan caps, like the Persians who cross the Galata bridge at Constantinople. Others wore fur coats reaching to their heels, and top hats of

ancient architecture. It was the market of the London Ghetto, and thronged with flashy young Jews and Jewesses, starved-looking men of Slav aspect, and shifty-eyed boys who were professional pickpockets and sold the harvest of their day's toil to the old villains in the booths.

It was a young thief who acted as our guide to some of these places, and he performed a delicate operation in the way of housebreaking for our benefit. We were eager to get a photograph of Peter the Painter, and he told us that he knew of the only one in existence. It belonged to a "young lady" who had been Peter's friend, and naturally wished to keep secret her association with this bandit. It stood on her bedroom mantelpiece, and if we would give him half an hour, he would "pinch" it for us. But he would have to replace it after we had made use of it. At the end of an hour he returned with the photograph of a good-looking young Russian, and told us that it had been an "easy job." This photograph was reproduced as the only authentic portrait of Peter the Painter, but I have grave doubts about it.

With this lad, who was an intelligent fellow and vowed that henceforth he was going to lead an honest life, as burglary was a mug's game, he went into the cellars below a certain restaurant which were used as a library of anarchist literature. Doubtless there was more high explosive here, in the way of destructive philosophy, than one might find in Woolwich Arsenal, but we did not examine those dangerous little pamphlets and books which preached the gospel of revolution. At that time, before the advent of Bolshevism in the history of the world, that propaganda seemed to have no bearing upon the ordinary facts of life, and did not interest us. It was at a later period that the international anarchist in London translated his textbooks and touted them outside the gates of English factories, and slipped them into the hands of unemployed men.

In those pre-war days, the foreign revolutionaries in London kept themselves aloof from English life and, as I have said, generally avoided unpleasant contact with the English law. Living in the foulest lodgings—I sicken still at the memory of the stench we encountered in some of their tenement houses—many of these young tailors, cigarette makers, and factory hands dressed themselves up in the evening and came down West with their girl friends to the music halls and night clubs in the neighborhood of Piccadilly, leaving the older folk to their squalor and the children to the playground of the streets and courts. Now and again they stabbed each other, or cut each other's throats, but, as a rule, such incidents were hushed up by their neighbors, and the London police were not invited to inquire into affrays between these aliens. . . . The war made a great clearance of these foreigners, and many of their old haunts have disappeared.

By the merest chance I saw the disappearance of one of the oldest and most historic haunts of London lawbreakers. It was the abandonment of the Old Bailey, before its grim and ancient structure was pulled down to make way for the new and imposing building where Justive again pursues its relentless way with those who fall into its grip. Ever since Roman days there has been a prison on the site of the Old Bailey, and for hundreds of years men and women have languished there in dark cells, rattled their chains behind its bars, rotted with jail fever, and died on the gallows tree within its walls. The dark cruelties of English justice which, in the old days, was merciless with all who broke its penal laws, however young and innocent till then, belong to forgotten history, for the most part, but as time is counted in history, it is not long since the judges of the Old Bailey condemned young girls to death for stealing a few ribbons or handkerchiefs, and my own grandfather saw their executions, in batches.

But on the last day of the Old Bailey, when the police were withdrawn from its courtroom and corridors, before its furniture and fittings were to be put up for public auction, the crowd I met there did not remember those old ruthless days. They were the criminals of a later generation who had been put in the cells as "drunks and disorderlies," as pickpockets and "petty larcenies," brought up for judgment with the knowledge that short sentences would be inflicted on them.

It was one of the most remarkable crowds I have ever seen. Some queer sentiment had brought all these crooks and jailbirds to see the last of their old "home." Frowzy women and "flash" girls, old scamps of the casual ward and doss house, habitual drunkards, and young thieves, sporting touts and burglars of the Bill Sikes brand, had gathered together, as though by special invitation, to the "private view." Laughing, excited, full of loquacious reminiscences, they wandered through the charge room and the cells where they had been "lagged," pointed out the cell from which Jack Sheppard had escaped, and other cells once inhabited by famous murderers and criminals, and surged into the great court where they had stood in the dock facing the scarlet-robed judge and all the majesty of law. They stood in the dock again, lots of them, jeering, with bursts of hoarse laughter at the merry jest.

They crowded up to the judge's throne. One young coster, with a gift of mimicry, put on a judicial manner, wagged his head solemnly, and sentenced his pals to death. Shrieks of laughter greeted his pantomime. An old ruffian with a legal-looking face, sodden with drink, played the part of prosecuting counsel, addressed an imaginary judge as "M'lud," the crowd as "gentlemen of the jury," and asserted that the evidence was overwhelming as to the guilt of the prisoner, who was indeed "a naughty, naughty man."

"The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the

truth!" screamed a girl with big feathers in her hat, and she laughed hysterically at her own humor.

There was something grim and tragic beneath the comedy of the scene. This travesty of the law by those who had been in its clutches revealed a vicious psychology lost to all shame and decency, but was also a condemnation of society which produced such types of men and women, for the most part victims of slum life, foul surroundings, and evil upbringing, tolerated, and indeed created, by the social system of England. It needed the pen of Dickens to describe this scene, and truly it was a hark-back to the days of Dickens himself. I was astounded that such characters as Bill Sikes, Old Fagin and Nancy, and Charley Bates should still remain in the London of Edward VII, as they appeared in the living image that day in the Old Bailey.

I wandered upstairs into deserted rooms. They were strewn with papers ankle-deep, and on the table I saw a bulky volume, bound in iron, which was the old charge book, dating from 1730. To this day I regret that I did not "pinch" it, for it was an historic relic which, with scandalous carelessness, was thrown away. But I was afraid of carrying off such a big thing, lest I should find myself on a more modern charge-sheet at another court. I did, however, stuff a number of papers into my pockets, and when I reached home and examined them, I found that they were also historical documents of great interest.

One of them, for instance, was a list of eighty convicts, or so, condemned to penal servitude and transportation to Botany Bay. Many of them—boys and girls—had been sentenced to death for the crime of stealing a few potatoes, a pinafore, some yards of cotton, or, in one case, for breaking a threshing machine, and had been "graciously reprieved by His Majesty King William IV" and condemned to that ferocious punishment of penal servitude in the convict settlements of Australia, which

to many of them was a living death, until by flogging, and insanitary conditions, and disease, death itself released them. That was but a few years before the reign of Queen Victoria!

It was in the new Old Bailey, very handsomely paneled, nicely warmed, lighted with delicate effects of color through high windows—doubtless the clerks of the court thought it quite a privilege for the criminals to be judged in such a place—that I saw the trial of that famous and astonishing little murderer, Doctor Crippen.

It will be remembered that he was captured on a ship bound for Halifax, with a girl named Ethel le Neve, dressed up in boy's clothes, with whom he had eloped after killing his wife and dissecting her body for burial in his cellar.

Crippen looked a respectable little man, with weak, watery eyes and a drooping moustache, so ordinary a type of middle-class business man in London that quite a number of people, including one of my own friends, were arrested by mistake for him when the hue and cry went forth.

I was at Bournemouth at that time, in one of the aviation meetings which were held in the early days of flying. It was celebrated by fancy fêtes, open-air carnivals, fancy-dress balls, and all kinds of diversions. The most respectable town in England, inhabited mostly by retired colonels, well-to-do spinsters, and invalids, seemed to take leave of its senses in a wild outburst of frivolity. Even the Mayor was to be seen in the broad glare of sunshine, wearing a false nose. Into that atmosphere of false noses and fancy frocks came telegrams to several newspaper correspondents from their editors.

"Scotland Yard believes Crippen at Bournemouth. Please get busy."

That was the tenor of the telegram sent to me, and I saw by the pink envelopes received by friends at table

in the Grand Hotel one night that they had received similar messages. One by one they stole out, looking mightily secretive—in search of Crippen, who, by that time was nearing Halifax.

With a friend named Harold Ashton, a well-known "crime sleuth," I went into the hall, and after a slight discussion decided that if Crippen was in Bournemouth it was not our job to find him. We were, for the time, experts in aviation, and couldn't be put off by foolish murders.

As we went upstairs, Ashton put his head over the banisters, and then uttered an exclamation.

"Scotland Yard!"

Looking over the stair rail, I saw a pair of boots, belonging to a man sitting in the hall. True enough, they had come from Scotland Yard, according to the tradition which enables any detective to be recognized at a glance by any criminal. One of those detectives had been sent down on the false rumor, and probably hoped to find Doctor Crippen and Ethel le Neve disguised as Pierrot and Columbine on the pier.

Ashton and I decided to have a game with the man. We wrote a note in block letters, as follows:

"ARE YOU LOOKING FOR DOCTOR CRIPPEN? IF SO, BEWARE!"

By a small bribe, we hired a boy to deliver it to the detective, and then depart quickly.

The effect was obviously disconcerting to the man, for he looked most uneasy, and then hurried out of the hotel. Doubtless he could not understand how anybody in Bournemouth could know of his mission. Ashton and I followed him, and he was immediately aware that he was being shadowed. He went into a public house and ordered a glass of beer which he did not drink. Ashton and I did the same, and were quick on his heels when he

slipped out by a side door. We kept up this game for quite a time, until we tired of it, and to this day the detective must wonder who shadowed him so closely in Bournemouth, and for what fell purpose.

Curiously, by the absurd chances of journalistic life, I became mixed up in the Crippen case, not only by having to describe the trial, but by having to write the life story of Ethel le Neve. That girl, who had been Crippen's typist, was quite a pretty and attractive little creature, and in spite of her flight with him in boy's clothes, the police were satisfied that she was entirely innocent of the murder. Anyhow, she was not charged, and upon her liberation she was immediately captured at a price, by *The Daily Chronicle,* who saw that her narrative would make an enormous sensation. They provided her with a furnished flat, under an assumed name, and for weeks *The Daily Chronicle* office was swarming with her sister's family, while office boys fetched the milk for the baby, and sub-editors paid the outstanding debts of the brother-in-law, in order that Ethel le Neve should reserve her tale exclusively to the nice, kind paper! Such is the dignity of modern journalism, desperate for a "scoop."

Eddy and I were again associated in the extraction of Ethel le Neve's tale. Eddy, as a young barrister, now well-known and prosperous at the Bar, cross-examined her artfully, and persistently, with the firm belief that she knew all about the murder. Never once, however, did he trap her into any admission.

From my point of view, the psychology of the girl was extremely interesting. Just a little Cockney girl, from a family of humble class and means, she had astonishing and unusual qualities. It is characteristic of her that when she was staying in Brussels with Crippen, disguised as a boy—and a remarkably good-looking boy she appeared—because she knew that Crippen was wanted by the law for "some old thing or other," which she didn't

bother to find out, she spent most of her time visiting the art galleries and museums of the Belgian capital. She had regarded the whole episode as a great "lark," until at Halifax detectives came aboard and arrested the fugitives on a charge of murder. She admitted to me that, putting two and two together, little incidents that had seemed trivial at the time, and remembering queer words spoken by Crippen—"the doctor," as she called him—she had no doubt now of his guilt. But, as she also admitted, that made no difference to her love for him. "He was mad when he did it," she said, "and he was mad for me." That was the extraordinary thing—that deep, sincere, and passionate love between the little weak-eyed, middle-aged quack doctor, and this common, pretty little Cockney girl.

I read Crippen's love letters, written to Ethel le Neve from prison, immensely long letters, written on prison paper in a neat little writing, without a blot or a fault. All told, there were forty thousand words of them—as long as a novel—and they were surprising in their good style, their beauty of expression, their resignation to death. These two people from the squalor of a London suburb, might have been mediæval lovers in Italy of Boccaccio's time, when murder for love's sake was lightly done.

In a little restaurant in Soho I sat with Ethel le Neve, day after day, while all the journalists of England were searching for her. Many times she was so gay that it was impossible to believe that she had escaped the hangman's rope by no great distance, and that her lover was a little blear-eyed man lying under sentence of death. Yet that gayety of hers was not affected or forced. It bubbled out of her because of a quick and childish sense of humor, which had not been killed by the frightful thing that overshadowed her. When that shadow fell upon her spirit again, she used to weep, but never for

long. Her last request to me was that I should have Doctor Crippen's photograph made into a miniature which she could wear concealed upon her breast. On the morning of his execution she put on black for him, and wished that she might have died with him on the scaffold.

I am certain, as the police were, that she was guiltless of all knowledge and participation in the murder of Mrs. Crippen, but she seemed as careless of that crime as any woman of the Borgias when a rival was removed from her path of love. Some old strain of passionate blood had thrust up again in this London typist girl, whose name of le Neve might hold the clue, if we knew her family history, to this secret of her personality.

I was glad to see the last of her, having written down her tale, because that was not the kind of journalism which appealed to my instincts or ideals, and I sickened at the squalor of the whole story of love and murder, as I sat with Ethel le Neve in friendly discourse, not without pity for this girl whose life had been ruined by her folly, and who would be forever haunted by the grim tragedy of Crippen's crime.

VII

ALTHOUGH my reminiscences hitherto have dealt with my adventures as a special correspondent, I have from time to time sat with assumed dignity in the editorial chair. Indeed, I was an editor before I was twenty-one, and I may say that I began life very high up in the world and have been climbing down steadily ever since.

I was at least very high up—on the top floor of the House of Cassell, in La Belle Sauvage Yard—when I assumed, at the age of nineteen, the enormous title of Educational Editor, and gained the microscopic salary of a hundred and twenty pounds a year.

With five pounds capital and that income, I married, with an audacity which I now find superb. I was so young, and looked so much younger, that I did not dare to confess my married state to my official chief, who was the Right Honorable H. O. Arnold-Forster, in whose room I sat, and one day when my wife popped her head through the door and said "Hullo!" I made signs to her to depart.

"Who's that pretty girl?" asked Arnold-Forster, and with shame I must confess that I hid the secret of our relationship.

That first chief of mine was one of the most extraordinary men I ever met, and quite the rudest to all people of superior rank to himself.

As Secretary to the Admiralty, and afterward Minister of War, many important visitors used to call on him in his big room at the top of Cassell's, where he was one of the Directors. I sat opposite, correcting proofs of

school books and advertisements, writing fairy tales in spare moments, and listening to Arnold-Forster's conversation. He treated distinguished admirals, generals, and colonels as though they were office boys, so that they perspired in his presence, and were sometimes deeply affronted, but, on the other hand, as a proof of chivalry, he treated office boys and printers' devils as though they were distinguished admirals, generals, and colonels, with a most particular courtesy.

I saw him achieve the almost incredible feat of dictating a complete history of England as he paced up and down his room, with hardly a note. It is true that his patient secretary had to fill in the dates afterward, and verify the "facts," which were often wrong, but the result was certainly the most vivid and illuminating history of England ever written for young people, and Rudyard Kipling wrote to him that it was one of the few books that had kept him out of bed all night.

To me Arnold-Forster was the soul of kindness, and encouraged me to write my first book, "Founders of the Empire," which is still selling in English schools, after twenty years, though I make no profit thereby.

At twenty-three years of age, I heard of a new job, and applied for it. It was the position of managing editor of the Tillotsons' Literary Syndicate, in the North of England. The audacity of my application alarmed me as I wrote the letter, and I excused myself, as I remember, in the final sentence. "As Pitt said," I wrote, "I am guilty of the damnable crime of being a Young Man."

That sentence gained me the position, as I afterward heard. The Tillotsons were three young brothers who believed in youth. They were amused and captured by that phrase of mine. So I went North for a time, with my young wife.

It was a great experience in the market of literary wares. My task was to buy fiction and articles for syn-

dicating in the provincial and colonial press, and my judgment was put to test of the sales list.

I "spotted" some winners who are now famous. Among them I remember was Arnold Bennett. He sent in a story called "The Grand Babylon Hotel"—his first romance—and I read it with the conviction that it was first-class melodrama. He asked a paltry price, which I accepted, and then I asked him to lunch in London—the joy of seeing London again!—and made him an offer for the book rights. He agreed to that fee, but afterward, when the book was immensely successful, he grieved over his bad bargain, and in one of his later books he warned all authors against a pale-faced young man, with his third finger deeply stained by nicotine, who had a habit of asking authors to lunch and robbing them over the coffee cups. Later in life he forgave me.

Although I had hard work as editor in Bolton of the Black Country—the city was ugly, but the people kind—it was there that I found my pen, and whatever quality it has.

I wrote an immense number of articles on every kind of subject, to be syndicated in the provincial press, and I made a surprising success with a weekly essay called "Knowledge is Power." Like Francis Bacon, "I took all knowledge for my province" by "swotting up" the great masters of drama, poetry, novels, essays, philosophy, and art. It was my own education, condensed into short essays, written with the simplicity, sincerity, and enthusiasm of youth, for people with less chances than myself. I began to get letters from all parts of the earth, partly for the reason that the articles appeared in *The Weekly Scotsman,* among other papers, which goes wherever a Scottish heart beats. Correspondents confided in me, as in an old wise man—the secrets of their lives, their hopes and ambitions, their desire to know the strangest and quaintest things. Old ladies sent me cakes, flowers, and

innumerable verses. Young men asked me how they could become the Lord Mayor's coachman (that was an actual question!), or find the way to Heaven.

Meanwhile Fleet Street called to me with an alluring voice. Kind as the people were to me in Bolton—beyond all words kind—I sickened for London. One night I wrote a letter to Alfred Harmsworth, founder of *The Daily Mail,* and afterward Lord Northcliffe. Almost by return post he asked me to call on him, and I took the chance.

I remember as though it were yesterday my first interview with that genius of the new journalism. He kept me waiting for a while in an antechamber of Carmelite House. Young men, extremely well dressed, and obviously in a great hurry on business of enormous importance to themselves, kept coming and going. Messenger boys in neat little liveries bounced in and out of the "Chief's" room, in answer to his bell. Presently one of them approached me and said, "Your turn." I drew a deep breath, prayed for courage, and found myself face to face with a handsome, clean-shaven, well-dressed man, with a lock of brown hair falling over his broad forehead, and a friendly, quizzical look in his brown eyes.

Sitting back in a deep chair, smoking a cigar, he read some of the articles I had brought, and occasionally said "Not bad!" or "Rather amusing!" Once he looked up and said, "You look rather pale, young man. Better go to the South of France for a bit."

But it was the air of Fleet Street I wanted.

Presently he gave me the chance of it.

"How would you like to edit Page Four, and write two articles a week?"

I went out of Carmelite House with that offer accepted, uplifted to the seventh heaven of hope, and yet a little scared by the dangerous and dazzling height which I had reached.

A month later, having uprooted my home in the North, brought a wife and babe to London, incurred heavy expenses with a mortgage on the future, I presented myself at *The Daily Mail* again, and awaited the leisure and pleasure of Alfred Harmsworth.

When I was shown into his room, he only dimly remembered my face.

"Let me see," he said, groping back to the distant past, which was four weeks old.

When I told him my name, he seemed to have a glimmer of some half-forgotten compact.

"Oh, yes! The young man from the North. . . . Wasn't there some talk of making a place for you in *The Daily Mail?*"

My heart fell down a precipice. . . . I mentioned the offer that had been made and accepted. But Harmsworth looked a little doubtful.

"Page Four? Well, hardly that, perhaps. I've appointed another editor."

I thought of my wife and babe, and unpaid bills.

"Do you mind touching the bell?" asked Harmsworth.

The usual boy came in, and was ordered to send down a certain gentleman whose name I did not hear. Presently the door opened, and a tall, thin, pale, handsome, and extremely haughty young gentleman sauntered in and said "Good afternoon," icily.

Harmsworth presented me to Filson Young, whom afterward I came to know as one of the most brilliant writers in Fleet Street, as he still remains. Not then did I guess that we should meet as chroniclers of world war in the ravaged fields of France.

"Oh, Young," said Harmsworth, in his suavest voice, "this is a newcomer, named Philip Gibbs. I half promised him the editorship of Page Four."

Here he tapped Young on the shoulder, and added in a jocular way:

"And if you're not very careful, young man, he may edit Page Four!"

Young offered me a cold hand, and there was not a benediction in his glance. I was put under his orders as a writer, as heir presumptive to his throne. As it happened, we became good friends, and he had no grudge against me when, some months later, he vacated the chair in my favor and went to Ireland for *The Daily Mail,* to collect material for his brilliant essays on "Ireland at the Crossroads."

So there I was, in the Harmsworth *régime,* which has made many men, and broken others. It was the great school of the new journalism, which was very new in England of those days, and mainly inspired by the powerful, brilliant, erratic, and whimsical genius of Alfred Harmsworth himself.

I joined his staff at the end of the Boer War period, when there was a brilliant group of men on *The Daily Mail,* such as Charles Hands, Edgar Wallace, H. W. Wilson, Holt White, and Filson Young. The editor was "Tom" Marlowe, still by a miracle in that position, which he kept through years of turbulence and change, by carrying out with unfaltering hesitation every wish and whimsey of The Chief, and by a sense of humor which never betrayed him into regarding any internal convulsion, revolution, or hysteria of *The Daily Mail* system as more than the latest phase in an ever-changing game. Men might come, and men might go, but Marlowe remained forever, bluff, smiling, imperturbable, and kind.

Above him in power of direction, dynamic energy, and financial authority, was Kennedy Jones, whom all men feared and many hated. He had a ruthless brutality of speech and action which Harmsworth, more human, more generous, and less cruel (though he had a strain of cruelty), found immensely helpful in running an organization which could not succeed on sentiment or brotherly

love. Kennedy Jones would break a man as soon as look at him, if he made a mistake "letting down" the paper, if he earned more money for a job which could be done for less by a younger man, if he showed signs of getting tired. That was his deliberate policy as a "strong man" out to win at any price, but, as in most men of the kind, there lay beneath his ruthlessness a substratum of human quality which occasionally revealed itself in friendly action. He had a cynical honesty of outlook on life, which gave his conversation at times the hard sparkle of wit and the bitter spice of truth. Beyond any doubt, the enormous success of the Northcliffe press, as it was afterward called, owed a great deal to the business genius of this man.

Alfred Harmsworth himself provided the ideas, the policy, the spirit of the machine. He was the enthusiast, the explorer, and the adventurer, with the world's news as his uncharted seas. He had only one test of what was good to print, "Does this interest Me?" As he was interested, with the passionate curiosity of a small boy who asks continually "How?" and "Why?", in all the elementary aspects of human life, in its romances and discoveries, its new toys and new fads, its tragedies and comedies of the more obvious kind, its melodramas and amusements and personalities, that test was not narrow or one-eyed. The legend grew that Harmsworth, afterward Northcliffe, had an uncanny sense of public opinion, and, with his ear to the ground, knew from afar what the people wanted, and gave it to them. But, in my judgment, he had none of that subtlety of mind and vision. He had a boyish simplicity, overlaid by a little cunning and craft. It was not what the public wanted that was his guiding rule. It was what he wanted. His luck and genius lay in the combination of qualities which made him typical to a supreme degree of the average man, as produced by the triviality, the restlessness, the craving for

sensation, the desire to escape from boredom, the impatience with the length and dullness and difficulty of life and learning, the habit of taking short cuts to knowledge and judgment, which characterized that great middle-class public of the world before the war.

One method by which Harmsworth impressed his own views and character on the staff and paper was to hold a daily conference in *The Daily Mail* office, which all editors, sub-editors, reporters, special correspondents, and glorified office boys were expected to attend. Freedom of speech was granted, and free discussion invited, without distinction of rank. The man who put a good idea into the pool was rewarded by Harmsworth's enthusiastic approbation, while he himself criticized that day's paper, pointed out its defects, praised some article which had caught his fancy, and discussed the leading matter for next day's paper. Cigarettes and cigars lay ready to the hand. Tea was served, daintily. Laughter and jokes brightened this daily rendezvous, and Harmsworth, at these times, in those early days, was at his best—easy, boyish, captivating, to some extent inspiring. But it was an inspiration in the triviality of thought, in the lighter side of the Puppet Show. Never once did I hear Harmsworth utter one serious commentary on life, or any word approaching nobility of thought, or any hint of some deep purpose behind this engine which he was driving with such splendid zest in its power and efficiency. On the other hand, I never heard him say a base word or utter an unclean or vicious thought.

He was very generous at times to those who served him. I know one man who approached him for a loan of £100.

He was shocked at the idea.

"Certainly not! Don't you know that I never lend money? I wouldn't do it if you were starving in the gutter."

Then he wrote a cheque for £100, and said, "But I'll give it to you, my dear fellow. Say no more about it."

Now and again, when he saw one of his "young men" looking pale and run down, he would pack him off for a holiday in the South of France, with all his expenses paid. In later years he gave handsome pensions to many who had served him in the early days.

He had his court favorites, like the mediæval kings, generally one of the newcomers who had aroused his enthusiasm by some little "scoop," or a brilliant bit of work. But he tired of them quickly, and it was a dangerous thing to occupy that position, because it was almost certain to mean a speedy fall.

For a little while I was one of his favorites. He used to chat with me in his room and say amusing, indiscreet things, about other members of the staff, or his numerous brothers.

I remember his looking up once from his desk where he sat in front of a bust of Napoleon, to whom he bore a physical resemblance, and upon whose character and methods with men he closely modeled himself.

"Gibbs," he said, "whenever you see a man looking like a codfish walking about these passages, you'll know my brother Cecil brought him in. Then he comes to me to hoik him out again!"

As temporary favorite, I was invited down to Sutton Court, a magnificent old mansion of Elizabethan days, in Surrey. It was in the early days of motoring, and I was taken down in a great car, and back in another, and felt like an emperor. Harmsworth was a delightful host, and kept open house during the week-ends, where one heard the latest newspaper "shop" under the high timbered roof and between the paneled walls, where the great ladies and gentlemen of England, in silks and brocades, had dined and danced by candlelight.

It was here, in the minstrels' gallery, one afternoon,

that Harmsworth asked me to tell him all about "syndicating," according to my experience with the Tillotsons' syndicate. I told him, and he became excited.

"Excellent! I tell you what to do. Go back to *The Daily Mail* and say I've sacked you. Then go to the South of France with your wife, for three months. I'll pay expenses. After that, return to Fleet Street, where you'll find an office waiting for you, called 'the British Empire Syndicate, Limited.' Nobody must know that I'm behind it. . . . How's that for a scheme?"

It seemed to me a pretty good scheme, although I was doubtful whether I could work it. I temporized, and suggested drawing out the scheme on paper, more in detail. That disappointed him. He wanted me to say, "Rather! The chance of a life time!" My hesitation put me into the class he called, "Yes, but ——" I drew up the scheme, but he went for a visit to Germany, and on his return did not give another thought to the "British Empire Syndicate, Limited." Other ideas had absorbed his interest.

At the end of a year I saw I was losing favor. An incident happened which forewarned me of approaching doom. He had returned from another visit to Germany, and was in a bad temper, believing, as he always did, that *The Daily Mail* had gone to the dogs in his absence. He reproved me sharply for the miserable stuff I had been publishing in Page Four, and demanded to see what I had got in hand.

I took down some "plums"—special articles by brilliant and distinguished men. He glanced through them, and laid them down angrily.

"Dull as ditchwater! Send them all back!"

I protested that it was impossible to send them back, as they were all commissioned. My own honor and honesty were at stake.

"Send them all back!" he said, with increasing anger.

I did not send them back, but gave them "snappier" titles. The next day he sent for me again, and demanded to see what else I proposed to publish—"not that trash you showed me yesterday!"

I took down the same articles, with some others. He had more leisure, read them while he smoked a cigar, and at intervals said, "Good!" . . . "Excellent!" . . . "Why didn't you show these to me yesterday?"

Needless to say, I did not enlighten him. I was saved that time, but a few months later I saw other signs of disfavor.

I remember that at that time I had to see General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, that grand old man for whose humanity and love I had a great respect, in spite of his methods of conversion, with scarlet coats and tambourines. He was angry with something I had written, and was violent in his wrath. But then he forgave me and talked very gently and wisely of the responsibilities of journalism, "the greatest power in the world for good or evil."

Presently the old man seized me by the wrist with his skinny old hand, and thrust me down on to my knees.

"Now let us pray for Alfred Harmsworth," he said, and offered up fervent prayer for his wisdom and light.

I don't know what effect that prayer had on Harmsworth, but it seemed to have an immediate effect upon my own fate. I was "sacked" from *The Daily Mail.*

VIII

AFTER my time on *The Daily Mail,* I joined *The Daily Express* for a few months before becoming one of the literary editors of *The Daily Chronicle.*

On *The Express* I came to know Sir Arthur Pearson before the days of his blindness, and did not admire him so much then (though I liked him) as in those later years when, by his magnificent courage, and his devoted service to all the blinded men of the war, he was one of the truly heroic figures of the world.

As a newspaper proprietor he was a man of restless energy, but narrower in his outlook, at that time, than his great rival, Harmsworth, whose methods he imitated. He was a strong adherent of tariff reform, when Joseph Chamberlain stumped the country in favor of that policy, which divided friend from friend, wrecked the amenities of social life, and started passionate arguments at every dinner table, somewhat in the same manner that the personality and policy of President Wilson caused social uproar in the United States, during the Peace Conference.

Pearson conferred on me the privilege, as I think he considered it, of recording the progress of the Chamberlain campaign, and it was the hardest work, I think, apart from war correspondence, that I have ever done. I do not regret having done it, for it took me into the midst of one of the biggest political conflicts in English history, led by one of the most remarkable men.

My task was to write each night what is called "a descriptive report," which means that I had to give the gist of each of Chamberlain's long speeches, with their salient points, and at the same time describe the scenes

in and around the hall, besieged everywhere by vast crowds of opponents and supporters who often came into conflict, Chamberlain's methods with his interrupters, and the incidents of the evening. Pearson often had a place on the platform, near the man for whom he had a real hero worship, and sent down little notes to me when various points of importance occurred to him. Always my article had to be finished within a few minutes of Chamberlain's peroration, in order to get it on to the wire for London.

It was at Newport, in Wales, I remember, that I nearly blighted my young life by over-sympathy with the sufferings of a fellow mortal. This was a correspondent of *The Daily Mail,* who had been a most convinced and passionate free trader. He had written, only a few weeks before, a series of powerful and crushing articles against tariff reform, which had duly appeared in *The Daily Mail,* until Harmsworth announced one morning that he had been talking to his gardener, and had decided that tariff reform would be a good thing for England. It would be, therefore, the policy of *The Daily Mail.*

By a refinement of cruelty which I am sure he did not realize, his free trade agent was sent down to reveal the glories of tariffs, as expounded by Chamberlain. It went sorely to the conscience of this Scot, who asked me plaintively, "How can I resign—with wife and bairns?" At Newport his distress was acute, owing to the immense reception of Chamberlain by crowds so dense that one could have walked over their mass, which was one solid block along the line of route.

Before the speech that night he stood me a bottle of wine, which we shared, and he wept over this red liquid at the abomination of tariffs, the iniquity of *The Daily Mail,* and the conscience of a correspondent. What that wine was, I cannot tell. It was certainly some dreadful kind of poison. I had drunk discreetly, but upon entering

the hall, I felt a weight on my head like the dome of St. Paul's, and saw the great audience spinning round like an immense revolving Face. For two hours' agony I listened to Chamberlain's speech on tin plates, wrote things I could not read, and at the end of the meeting, having thrust my stuff over the counter of the telegraph office, collapsed, and was very ill. I heard afterward that the free trade Scot was equally prostrate, but he survived, and in course of time became more easy in his conscience, and a Knight of the British Empire.

Toward the end of the campaign I saw that Joseph Chamberlain was breaking. I watched him closely, and saw signs of mental and physical paralysis creeping over him. Other people were watching him, with more anxiety. Mrs. Chamberlain was always on the platform, by his side, in every town, and her face revealed her own nervous strain. Chamberlain, "Our Joe," as his followers called him, lost the wonderful lucidity of his speech. At times he hesitated, and fumbled over the thread of his thought. When he was heckled, instead of turning round in his old style with a rapid, knock-out retort, he paused, became embarrassed, or stood silent with a strange and tragic air of bewilderment. It was pitiful toward the end. The strongest force in England was spent and done. The knowledge that his campaign had failed, that his political career was broken, as well as the immense fatigue he had undergone, and the intense effort of his persuasive eloquence, snapped his nerve and vitality. He was stricken, like President Wilson, one night, and never recovered.

In that campaign Chamberlain converted me against himself on the subject of tariff reform, but I learned to admire the courage, and hard sledge-hammer oratory of this great Imperialist leader who represented the old jingo strain of Victorian England, in its narrow patriotism and rather brutal intolerance, ennobled, to some ex-

tent, by old loyalties and traditions belonging to the sentiment of the British folk. The very name of Joseph Chamberlain seems remote now in English history, and the mentality of the English people has outgrown that time when he was fired by that wave of Imperialism which overtook the country and produced the genius of Kipling, the aggressive idealism of Cecil Rhodes, and the Boer War, with its adventures, its Call of the Wild, its stupidity, its blatant vulgarity, its jolly good fellows, its immense revelation of military incompetence, and its waste of blood and treasure.

After that campaign, I displeased Arthur Pearson by a trivial difference of opinion. He believed firmly that Bacon wrote "Shakespeare." I believed just as firmly that he didn't. When he asked me to write up some new aspect of that argument, I flatly refused, and Pearson was very much annoyed. A little later I resigned my position, and for some time he did not forgive me. But years later we met again, and he was generous and kind in the words he spoke about my work. It was out in France, when he visited the war correspondents' mess and went with us into Peronne after its capture by our troops. He was blind, but more cheerful than when I had known him in his sighted days. At least he had gained a miraculous victory over his tragic loss, and would not let it weaken him. That day in Peronne he walked into the burning ruins, touched the walls of shattered houses, listened to the silence there, broken by the sound of a gun or two, and the whirr of an aëroplane overhead. He saw more than I did, and his description afterward was full of detail and penetrating in its vision.

We met again, after the war, at a dinner in New York, when he spoke of the work of St. Dunstan's, which he had founded for blinded men. It was one of the most beautiful speeches I have ever heard—I think the most

beautiful—and there was not one of us there, in a gathering of American journalists and business men, who did not give all the homage in his heart to this great leader of the blind.

As one of the literary editors of *The Daily Chronicle,* I had a good deal of experience of the inside of newspaper life, and, on the whole, some merry times. The hours were long, for I used to get to the office shortly after ten, and, more often than not, did not leave till midnight. Having charge of the magazine page, which at that time was illustrated by black and white drawings, I was responsible for the work of three artists, alleged to be tame, but with a strain of wildness at times, which was manifested by wrestling bouts, when all of us were found writhing on the floor in what looked like a death struggle, when the door was opened by the office boy or some less distinguished visitor. One of them was Edgar Lander, generally known as "Uncle" in the Press Club, and in Bohemian haunts down Chelsea way. Endowed with a cynical sense of humor, a gift for lightning repartee which dealt knock-out blows with the sure touch of Carpentier, and a prodigious memory for all the characters of fiction in modern and classical works, he gave a good lead to conversation in the large room over the clock in Fleet Street where we had our workshop. Another of the artists was Alfred Priest, afterward well known as a portrait painter, and three times infamous in the Royal Academy as the painter of "the picture of the year." He was, and is, a philosophical and argumentative soul, and Lander and he used to trail their coats before each other, in a metaphorical way, with enormous conversational results, which sometimes ended in violence on both sides. The third artist, nominally under my control, but like the others, entirely out of it, was Stephen Reid, whom I have always regarded as a master craftsman of the black and white art, which he has now

abandoned for historical painting. A shrewd Scotsman also with a lively sense of humor, he kept the balance between his two colleagues, and roared with laughter at both of them.

We were demons for work, although we talked so much, and the page we produced day by day was, by general consensus of opinion, I think, the best of its kind in English journalism. We gave all our time and all our energy to the job, and I suppose there are few editors in the world, and few artists, who have ever been seen staggering down Fleet Street, as once Alfred Priest and myself might have been observed, one midnight, carrying a solid block of metal weighing something like half a hundredweight, in order that our page might appear next day. That was a full-page block with text and pictures, representing some great floods in England in which we had been wading all day. We were so late in getting back with our work that the only chance of getting it into the paper was to act as porters from the blockmakers to *The Daily Chronicle* press. We nearly broke our backs, but if it had been too late for the paper we should have broken our hearts. Such is the enthusiasm of youth—ill rewarded in this case, as in others, because the three artists were sacked when black and white drawings gave way to photography. Afterward Edgar Lander of my "three musketeers" lost the use of his best arm in the Great War, where, by his old name of "Uncle" and the rank of Captain, he served in France, and gave the gift of laughter to his crowd.

In those good old days of *The Daily Chronicle,* long before the war, there was a considerable sporting spirit, inspired by the news editor, Ernest Perris, who is now the managing editor, with greater gravity. Perris, undoubtedly the best news editor in London, was very human in quiet times, although utterly inhuman, or rather, superhuman, when there was a "world scoop" in progress.

It was he who challenged Littlewood, the dramatic critic, to a forty-mile walk for a £10 bet, and afterward, at the same price, anybody who cared to join in. I was foolishly beguiled into that adventure, when six of us set out one morning at six o'clock, from the Marble Arch to Aylesbury—a measured forty miles. We were all utterly untrained, and "Robin" Littlewood, the dramatic critic, singularly like Will Shakespeare in form and figure, refused to let his usual hearty appetite interfere with his athletic contest. It was a stop for five-o'clock tea which proved his undoing, for although he arrived at Aylesbury, he was third in the race, so losing his £10, and was violently sick in the George Inn. Perris was an easy first, and I was a bad second. I remember that at the thirtieth mile I became dazed and silly, and was seen by people walking like a ghost and singing the nursery rhymes of childhood. That night when the six returned by train to London, they were like old, old men, and so crippled that I, for one, had to be carried up the steps of Baker Street Station.

Another hobby of Perris's was amateur boxing, and I had an office reputation of knowing something of the science of that art, as I had a young brother who boxed for Oxford.

Perris, after various sparring bouts in which he had given bloody noses to sub-editors and others, challenged in mortal combat my friend Eddy, whom I have already introduced in this narrative. There had been some temperamental passages between the news editor and this young writer, so that, if the conflict took place, it would be lively. I acted as Eddy's second in the matter, and assuming immense scientific knowledge, coached him as to the right methods of attack. At least I urged upon him the necessity of aggressive action in the first round, because if he once gave Perris a chance of hitting out, Eddy would certainly be severely damaged, for Perris

is a big man with a clean-shaven face of a somewhat pugilistic type, and with a large-sized fist.

This little meeting between the news editor and his chief reporter aroused considerable interest in the office, and some betting. Quite a little crowd had collected in the sub-editorial room for the event. It was not of long duration. At the words, "Time, gentlemen," Eddy, heroic as any man inspired by anxiety, made an immediate assault upon Perris, like a swift over-arm bowler, and by a fluke of chance, landed the news editor a fearful blow on the head. It dazed him, but Eddy was not to be denied, and continued his attack with the ferocity of a man-eating tiger, until Perris collapsed. . . . After that, with greedy appetite for blood, he made mincemeat of a young man named "Boy" Jones, who asked for trouble and got it.

These little episodes behind the scenes of life in Fleet Street kept up the spirits and humor of men who, as a rule, worked hard and long each day, and were always at the mercy of the world's news, which sent them off upon strange errands in the Street of Adventure, or tied them to the desk, like slaves of the galleys.

My next experience in editorship was when I was appointed literary editor of a new daily paper called *The Tribune,* the history of which is one of the romantic tragedies of Fleet Street.

Its founder and proprietor was a very tall, handsome, and melancholy young man named Franklin Thomasson, who came from that city of Bolton in the Black Country where I had been managing editor of the Tillotson Syndicate. He had the misfortune of being one of the richest young men in England, as the son of an old cotton spinner who had built up the largest cotton mills in Lancashire. It was, I believe, a condition of his will that his son should establish a London journal in the Liberal interest. Anyhow, Franklin Thomasson, who was an idealist of

that faith, started *The Tribune* as a kind of sacred duty which he had inherited with his money. He appointed as his editor-in-chief a worthy old journalist of an old-fashioned type, named William Hill, who had previously been a news editor of *The Westminster Gazette,* an excellent evening paper with only one defect—it did not publish news. At least, it was not for any kind of news that people bought it, but entirely for the political philosophy of its editor, J. A. Spender, who was the High Priest of the Liberal Faith, and for the brilliant cartoons of "F.C.G.," who did more to kill Chamberlain and tariffs than any other power in England.

There were many people of knowledge and experience who warned Franklin Thomasson of the costly adventure of a new daily paper in London. Augustine Birrell, disastrous failure as Chief Secretary for Ireland, but distinguished for all time as a genial scholar and essayist, was one of them. I went to see him with William Hill, and toward the end of the interview, in which he was asked to become a kind of literary godfather to the new venture, he said to Franklin Thomasson, with a twinkle in his eyes,

"My dear Thomasson, I knew your father, and had a high respect for him. For his sake I advise you that if you pay £100,000 into my bank as a free gift, and do *not* start *The Tribune,* you will save a great deal of money!"

It was a prophecy that was only too truly fulfilled, for before Thomasson was through his troubles, he had lost £300,000.

A very brilliant staff of assistant editors and reporters was engaged by William Hill—many of the most brilliant journalists in England, and some of the worst. Among them (I will not say in which category) was myself, but at the first assembly of editors before the publication of the paper, I received a moral shock.

I encountered a next-door-neighbor of mine, named

Hawke, who had been a colleague of mine on *The Daily Chronicle*.

I greeted him with pleasure, and surprise.

"Hullo, Hawke, what are you doing here?"

"I'm literary editor," he said. "What are you?"

"That's funny!" I replied. "I happen to be literary editor of this paper!"

William Hill had appointed two literary editors, to be perfectly on the safe side. He had also appointed two news editors. Whether the two news editors settled the dispute by assassination, I do not know. Only one functioned. But Hawke and I agreed to divide the job, which we did in the friendliest way, Hawke controlling the reviews of books, and I editing the special articles, stories, and other literary contents of the paper.

It was started with a tremendous flourish of trumpets in the way of advance publicity. On the first day of publication, London was startled by the appearance of all the omnibus horses and cart horses caparisoned in white sheets bearing the legend "Read *The Tribune*." Unfortunately it was a wet and stormy day, and before an hour or two had passed, the white mantles were splashed with many gobs of mud, and waved wildly as dirty rags above the backs of the unfortunate animals, or dangled dejectedly about their legs. A night or two before publication, a grand reception was given, regardless of expense, to an immense gathering of political and literary personalities. The walls of *The Tribune* office were entirely covered with hothouse flowers, and baskets of orchids hung from the ceilings. Wine flowed like water, and historical truth compels me to confess that some members of the new staff were overcome by enthusiasm for this rich baptism of the new paper. One young gentleman, very tall and eloquent, fell as gracefully as a lily at the feet of Augustine Birrell. Another, when the guests were gone, resented some fancied impertinence

from the commissionaire, and knocked him through the telephone box. One of the office boys, unaccustomed to champagne, collapsed in a state of coma and was put in the lift for metal plates and carried aloft to the machine room. Long after all the guests had gone, and Franklin Thomasson himself had returned home, another gentleman in high authority on the organizing side was so melted with the happy influences of the evening that his heart expanded with human brotherly love for the night wanderers of London who had been attracted by the lights and music in *The Tribune* office, and he invited them to carry off the baskets of orchids in the hall, as a slight token of his affection and sympathy. Indeed, his generosity was so unbounded that he made them a gift of the hall clock—a magnificent timepiece with chimes like St. Paul's Cathedral—and they were about to depart with it, praising God for this benevolence, when Franklin Thomasson, who had been summoned back by telephone, arrived on the scene to save his property and restore discipline.

It was, of course, only a few Bohemian souls who were carried away by the excitement of that baptismal night. Generally speaking, the staff of *The Tribune* was made up of men of high and serious character, whose chief fault, indeed, was to err rather much on the side of abstract idealism and the gravity of philosophical faith.

We produced a paper which was almost too good for a public educated in the new journalism of the Harmsworth school, with its daily sensations, its snippety articles, its "stunt" stories. We were long, and serious, and "high-brow," and—to tell the truth—dull. The public utterly refused to buy *The Tribune*. Nothing that we could do would tempt them to buy it. As literary editor of special articles and stories, I bought some of the most brilliant work of the best writers in England. I published one of Rudyard Kipling's short stories—a

gem—but it did not increase the circulation of *The Tribune* by a single copy. I published five chapters of autobiography by Joseph Conrad—a literary masterpiece—but it did not move the sales. I persuaded G. K. Chesterton to contribute a regular article; I published the work of many great novelists, and encouraged the talent of the younger school; but entirely without success. It was desperately disappointing, and I am convinced that the main cause of our failure was the surfeit of reading matter we gave each day to a public which had no leisure for such a mass of print, however good its quality. The appearance of the paper, owing to the lack of advertisements, was heavy and dull, and any bright and light little articles were overshadowed among the long, bleak columns.

A new editor, belonging to the Harmsworth school, a charming little man named S. G. Pryor, succeeded William Hill, but his attempts to convert *The Tribune* into a kind of *Daily Mail* offended our small clientele of serious readers, without attracting the great public.

After two years of disastrous failure, Franklin Thomasson, who by that time had lost something like £300,000, decided to cut his losses, and the news leaked out among his staff of over eight hundred men that the ship was sinking. It was a real tragedy for those men who had left good jobs to join *The Tribune,* and who saw themselves faced with unemployment, and even ruin and starvation for their wives and families. Some of us made desperate endeavors to postpone the sentence of death by introducing new capital.

One of my colleagues journeyed to Dublin in the hope of persuading Augustine Birrell to obtain government support for this Liberal organ.

He sent a somewhat startling telegram to Birrell at Dublin Castle.

"The lives of eight hundred men with their wives and

children depend on the interview which I beg you to grant me to-day."

Birrell was surprised, and granted the interview.

"Mr. Birrell," said my grave and melancholy friend, placing a hat of high and noble architecture on the great man's desk, "is *The Tribune* going to die?"

"Sir," said Mr. Birrell, twinkling through his eyeglasses, "may *The Tribune* die that death it so richly deserves."

I succeeded in holding up the sentence of doom for another fortnight, by the sportsmanship of a gallant old lady named the Countess of Carlisle. We had been conducting a temperance crusade which had earned her warm approval, and for the sake of that cause and her Liberal idealism, she offered to guarantee the men's wages until the paper might be sold.

But it was never sold. The fatal night came when Franklin Thomasson, white and distressed, but resolute, faced his staff with the dreadful announcement that that was the last night. One man fainted. Several wept. Outside the printers waited in the hope that at this twelfth hour some stroke of luck would avert this great misfortune. To them it was a question of bread and butter for wives and babes.

That luck stroke did not happen.

With several colleagues I waited, smoking and talking, after the sentence had been pronounced. It seemed impossible to believe that *The Tribune* was dead. It was more than the death of an abstract thing, more than the collapse of a business enterprise. Something of ourselves had died with it, our hopes and endeavors, our work of brain and heart. A newspaper is a living organism, threaded through with the nerves of men and women, inspired by their spirit, animated by their ideals and thought, the living vehicle of their own adventure of life. So *The Tribune* seemed to us then, in that last

hour, when we looked back on our labor and comradeship, our laughter, our good times together on "the rag," as we had called it.

Long after midnight I left the office for the last time, with that friend of mine who had gone to Augustine Birrell, a tall, melancholy-mannered, Georgian-looking man, whose tall hat was a noble specimen of old-fashioned type.

The brilliant lights outside the office suddenly went out. It was like the sinking of the ship. My friend said, "Dead! Dead!" and lifted his hat as in the presence of death.

IX

AFTER the downfall of *The Tribune* there was a period of suffering, anxiety, and in some cases despair, for many of the men who had held positions on that paper. One good fellow committed suicide. Others fell into grievous debt while waiting like Mr. Micawber for something to turn up. Fleet Street is a cruel highway for out-of-work journalists, and as so many were turned out into the street together it was impossible for all of them to be absorbed by other newspapers, already fully staffed.

There were rendezvous of disconsolate comrades in the Press Club or Anderton's Hotel, where they greeted each other with the gloomy inquiry, "Got anything yet?" and then, smoking innumerable cigarettes, in lieu, sometimes, of more substantial nourishment, cursed the cruelty of life, the abominable insecurity of journalism, and their own particular folly in entering that ridiculous, heartbreaking, soul-destroying career. . . . One by one, in course of time, they found other jobs down the same old street.

I determined to abandon regular journalism altogether, and to become a "literary gent" in the noblest meaning of the words, and anyhow a free lance. I have always regarded journalism as merely a novitiate for real literature, a training school for life and character, from which I might gain knowledge and inspiration for great novels, as Charles Dickens had done. My ambition, at that time, was limitless, and I expected genius to break out in me at any moment. Oh, Youth! Here, then, was my chance, now that I was free from the fetters of the journalistic prison house.

With a wealth of confidence and hope, but very little capital of a more material kind, I took a cottage at the seashore for a month and departed there with my wife and small boy. It was a coast-guard's cottage at Littlehampton, looking on to the sea and sand, and surrounded by a fence one foot high, like the doll's house it was. There, in a tiny room, filled with the murmur of the sea, and the vulgar songs of seaside Pierrots, I wrote my novel, *The Street of Adventure,* in which I told, in the guise of fiction, the history of *The Tribune* newspaper, and gave a picture of the squalor, disappointment, adventure, insecurity, futility, and good comradeship of Fleet Street.

It was much to be desired that this novel of mine should be a success. Even my wife's humorous contentment with poverty, which has always been a saving grace in my life, did not eliminate the need of a certain amount of ready money. *The Street of Adventure,* my most successful novel, cost me more than I earned. In the first place, it narrowly escaped total oblivion, which would have saved me great anxiety and considerable expense. After leaving the coast-guard's cottage at Littlehampton, with my manuscript complete—150,000 words in one month—I had to change trains at Guildford to get to London from some other place. My thoughts were so busy with the story I had written, and with the fortune that awaited me by its success, that I left the manuscript on the mantelpiece in the waiting room of Guildford Station, and did not discover my loss until I had been in London some hours. It seemed—for five minutes of despair—like the loss of my soul. Never should I have had the courage to rewrite that novel which had cost so much labor and so much nervous emotion. Despairingly I telegraphed to the station master, and my joy was great when, two hours later, I received his answer: "Papers found." Little did I then know that if he had

used them to brighten his fire I should have been saved sleepless nights and unpleasant apprehensions.

It was accepted and published by William Heinemann, on a royalty basis, and it was gloriously reviewed. But almost immediately I received a writ of libel from one of my friends and colleagues on the late *Tribune,* and sinister rumors reached me that Franklin Thomasson, the proprietor, and six other members of the staff were consulting their solicitors on the advisability of taking action against me. I saw ruin staring me in the face. My fanciful narrative had not disguised carefully enough the actuality of the *Tribune* and its staff. My fancy portraits and amiable caricatures had been identified, and could not be denied. Fortunately only one writ was actually presented and proceeded with, against myself and Heinemann, but the book was withdrawn from circulation at a time when the reviews were giving it columns of publicity, and it was killed stone dead—though later it had a merry resurrection.

The man who took a libel action against me was the character who in my book is called Christopher Codrington, the same young man who had lifted his hat when the lights went out and said, "Dead! Dead!" He and I had been good friends, and I believed, and still believe, that my portrait of him was a very agreeable and fanciful study of his amiable peculiarities—his Georgian style of dress, his gravity of speech, his Bohemianism. But he resented that portrait, and was convinced that I had grossly maligned him. The solicitors employed by myself and Heinemann to prepare the defense piled up the usual bill of costs (and I had to pay the publisher's share as well as my own), so that by the time the case was ready to come into court I knew that, win or lose, I should have some pretty fees to pay. It never came into court. A few days before the case was due, I met "Christopher Codrington" in Fleet Street! We paused,

hesitated, raised our hats solemnly, and then laughed (we had always been much amused with each other).

"What about some lunch together?" I suggested.

"It would never do," he answered. "In a few days we shall be engaged in a legal duel."

"Meanwhile one must eat," I remarked casually.

He agreed.

We had a good luncheon at The Cock in Fleet Street. I had the honor of paying for it. We discussed our chances in the libel action. Christopher Codrington said he had a "clear case." He emphasized the damnably incriminating passages. I argued that he would only make himself ridiculous by identifying himself with my pleasantries and giving them a sinister twist. We parted in a friendly, courteous way, as two gentlemen who would cross swords later in the week.

When my solicitors heard that we two had lunched together, they threw up their hands in amazement.

"The two principals in a libel action! And the one who alleges libel allows the other to pay for his lunch! The case collapses!"

They were shocked that the law should be treated with such levity. It almost amounted to contempt.

That evening I called on "Christopher Codrington" and explained the grievous lapse of etiquette we had both committed. He was disconcerted. He was also magnanimous. I obtained his signature to a document withdrawing the action, and we shook hands in token of mutual affection and esteem. . . . But all my royalties on the sales of the novel, afterward reissued in cheap form, went to pay Heinemann's bill and mine, and my most successful novel earned for me the sum of £25 until it had a second birth in the United States, after the war.

I knew after that the wear and tear, the mental distress, the financial uncertainty that befell a free lance in search of fame and fortune, when those mocking will-o'-

the-wisps lead him through the ditches of disappointment and the thickets of ill luck. How many hundreds of times did I pace the streets of London in those days, vainly seeking the plot of a short story, and haunted by elusive characters who would not fit into my combination of circumstances, ending at four thousand words with a dramatic climax! How many hours I have spent glued to a seat in Kensington Gardens, working out literary triangles with a husband and wife and the third party, two men and a woman, two women and a man, and finding only a vicious circle of hopeless imbecility! At such times one's nerves get "edgy" and one's imagination becomes feverish with effort, so that the more desperately one chases an idea, the more resolutely it eludes one. It is like the disease of sleeplessness. The more one tries to sleep, the more wakeful one becomes. Then the free lance, having at last captured a good idea, having lived with it and shaped it with what sense of truth and beauty is in his heart, carries it like a precious gem to the market place. Alas, there is no bidder! Or the price offered insults his sensitive pride, and mocks at his butcher's bill. It is "too good," writes a kindly editor. "It is hardly in our style," writes a courteous one. It is "not quite convincing," writes a critical one. . . . It is bad to be a free lance in this period, when fortune hides. It is worse to be the free lance's wife. His absent-mindedness becomes a disease.

(I remember posting twenty-two letters with twenty-two stamps, but separately, letters first and stamps next, in the red mouth of the pillar box!)

His moods of despair when his pen won't write a single lucky word give an atmosphere of neurasthenia to the house. He becomes irritable, uncourteous, unkind, because, poor devil, he believes that he has lost his touch and his talent, upon which this woman's life depends, as well as his own.

My life as a free lance was not devoid of those periods

of morbid depression, and yet, on the whole, I was immensely lucky, compared with many other beggars of my craft. It was seldom that I couldn't find some kind of a market for my wares, and I had an industry—I can at least boast of that, whatever the quality of my pen—which astonishes myself when I look back upon those days. I was also gifted to this extent—that I had the journalistic instinct of writing "brightly" on almost any subject in which I could grab at a few facts, and I could turn my pen to many different aspects of life and letters, which held for me always fresh and enthusiastic interest. Not high qualities, but useful to a young man in the capture of the fleeting guinea.

I worked hard, and I enjoyed my toil. While earning bread and butter by special articles and short stories, I devoted much time and infinite labor to the most unprofitable branch of literature, which is history, and my first love. Goodness knows how many books I read in order to produce my *Men and Women of the French Revolution,* published in magnificent style, with a superb set of plates from contemporary prints, and almost profitless to me.

It was by casual acquaintance with one of the queer old characters of London that I obtained the use of those plates. He was a dear, dirty old gentleman, who had devoted his whole life to print collecting and had one of the finest collections in England. He lived in an old house near Clerkenwell, which was just a storehouse for these engravings, mezzotints, woodcuts, and colored prints of the eighteenth century. He kept them in bundles, in boxes, in portfolios, wherever there was floor space, chair space, and table space. To reach his desk, where he sat curled up in a swivel chair, one had to step over a barricade of those bundles. At meal times he threw crumbs to the mice who were his only companions, except an old housekeeper, and whenever the need of

money became pressing, as it did in his latter years, he used to take out a print, sigh over it as at the parting of an old friend, and trot round to one of the London print sellers who would "cash it" like a cheque. . . . I think I made £150 out of *Men and Women of the French Revolution,* and my best reward was to see it, years later, in the windows of the Paris bookshops. That gave me a real thrill of pride and pleasure. . . .

I made less than £150 by my life of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, one of the most romantic characters in English history, and strangely unknown, except for Scott's portrait in *The Fortunes of Nigel,* and the splendid figure drawn by Alexandre Dumas in *The Three Musketeers,* until, with prodigious labor, which was truly a labor of love, I extracted from old papers and old letters the real life story of this man, and the very secrets of his heart, more romantic, and more fascinating, in actual fact, than the fiction regarding him by those two great masters.

I think it was £80 that I was paid for *King's Favorite,* in which again I searched the folios of the past for light on one of the most astounding mysteries in English history—the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury by the Earl of Somerset and the Countess of Essex—and discovered a plot with kings and princes, great lords and ladies, bishops and judges, poisoners, witch doctors, cutthroats and poets, as hideously wicked as in one of Shakespeare's tragedies. I was immensely interested in this work. I gained gratifying praise from scholars and critics. But I kept myself poor for knowledge sake. History does not pay—unless it is a world history by H. G. Wells. Never mind! I had a good time in writing it, and do not begrudge the labor.

My book on George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, brought me the friendship of the very noble and charming family of the Earl and Countess of Denbigh. Lord

Denbigh is the descendant of Susan Villiers—the sister of George Villiers—who married the first Earl of Denbigh, and he has in his possession the original letters written by the Duke of Buckingham to his devoted wife, and her beautiful letters to him, as well as a mass of other correspondence of great historical value. Lord Denbigh invited me down to Newnham Paddox, his lovely Warwickshire home, founded by his ancestors in the reign of James I, and in the long gallery I saw the famous VanDyck portraits of the Duke of Buckingham, the "hero" of my book, which have now been sold, with other priceless treasures, when war and after-war taxation have impoverished this old family, like so many others in England to-day. I always look back to those visits I paid to Newnham Paddox as to a picture of English life, before so much of its sunshine was eclipsed by the cost and sacrifice of that great tragedy. They were a large and happy family in that old house, with three sons and a crowd of beautiful girls, as frank and merry and healthy in body and soul as Shakespeare's Beatrice and Katherine, Rosamond and Celia. I remember them playing tennis below the broad terrace with its climbing flowers, and the sound of their laughter that came ringing across the court when Lady Dorothy leapt the net, or Lady Marjorie took a flying jump at a high ball. On a Sunday afternoon they captured some tremendous cart horses, grazing on the day of rest, mounted them without reins or bridle, rode them astride, charged each other like knights at a tourney, fearless and free, while Lady Denbigh laughed joyously at the sight of their romps. There was an exciting rat hunt in an old barn, which was nearly pulled down to get at the rats. . . . No one saw a shadow creeping close to those sunlit lawns, to touch the lives of this English family and all others. They played the good game of life in pre-war England. They played the game of life and death with equal courage

when war turned Newnham Paddox into a hospital and called upon those boys and girls for service and sacrifice. The eldest son, Lord Feilding, was an officer in the Guards, and badly wounded. Two of the boys were killed, one in the Army, one in the Navy. Lady Dorothy led an ambulance convoy in Belgium, and I met her there when she was under fire, constantly, in ruined towns and along sinister, shell-broken roads, injecting morphia into muddy, bloody men, just picked up from the fields and ditches, crying aloud in agony. Lady Denbigh herself wore out her health and spirit, and died soon after the Armistice. It was the record of many families like that, who gave all they had for England's sake.

During that time of free lancing I enlarged my list of acquaintances by friendly encounter with some of the great ones of the world, its passing notorieties, and its pleasant and unpleasant people.

In the first class was that curious old gentleman, the Duke of Argyll, husband of Princess Louise. As poor as a church mouse, he was given house-room in Kensington Palace, where I used to take tea with him now and then, and discuss literature, politics, and history, of which he had a roving knowledge. I was a neighbor of his, living at that time in what I verily believe was the smallest house in London, at Holland Street, Kensington, and it used to amuse me to step out of my doll's house, with or without eighteenpence in my pocket, and walk five hundred yards to the white portico on the west side of the old red brick palace, to take tea with a Royal duke. The poor old gentleman was so bored with himself that I think he would have invited a tramp to tea, for the sake of a little conversation, but for the austere supervision of Princess Louise, of whom he stood in awe. As the Marquis of Lorne, and one of the handsomest young men in England, he had gained something of a reputation as a poet and essayist. His poetry in later years was

ponderously bad, but he wrote idealistic essays which had some touch of style and revealed a mind above the average in nobility of purpose.

As an editor I had bought some of his literary productions, and had put a number of useful guineas into the old man's pockets, so that he had a high esteem for me, as a man with immense power in the press, though, as a free lance, I had none.

This acquaintanceship startled some of my brother journalists on the day of King Edward's funeral at Windsor Castle. The Duke of Argyll was a grand figure that day, in a magnificent uniform, with the Order of the Garter, decorations thick upon his breast, and a great plumed hat. After the ceremony, standing among a crowd of princes, he hailed me, and walked arm in arm with me along the ramparts. I felt somewhat embarrassed at this distinction, especially as I was in the full gaze of my comrades of Fleet Street, who stood at a little distance. They saw the humor of the situation when I gave them a friendly wink, but afterward accused me of unholy "swank."

It was about this time that I came to know Beerbohm Tree, in many ways the greatest, and in more ways the worst, of our English actors. He was playing Caliban in "The Tempest" when I sought an interview with him on the subject of Shakespeare.

"Shakespeare! . . . Shakespeare!" he said, leering at me with a beastlike face, according to the part he was playing, and clawing himself with apelike hands. "I seem to have heard that name. Is there anything I can say about him? No, there is nothing. I've said all I know a thousand times, and more than I know more times than that."

He could think of nothing to say about Shakespeare, but suggested that I should run away and write what I liked. I did, and it was at least a year before the article

was published in a series of provincial papers, a long article in which I wrote all that I thought Tree ought to say, if he loved Shakespeare with anything like my own passion.

One evening I received a long telegram from him.

"Honor me by accepting two stalls any night at His Majesty's and kindly call on me between the acts."

I accepted the invitation, wondering at its effusiveness. When I called on him, he was playing Brutus, and clasped my hand as though he loved me.

"Little do you know the service you have done me," he said. "My secretary told me the other night that I was booked for a lecture on Shakespeare at the Regent Street Polytechnic. I had forgotten it. I had nothing prepared. It was a dreadful nuisance. I said 'I won't go.' He said, 'I'm afraid you must.' . . . Two minutes later a bundle of press cuttings was brought to me. It contained your interview with me on the subject of Shakespeare. I read it with delight. I had no idea I had said all those things. What a memory you must have! I took the paper to the Polytechnic, and delivered my lecture, by reading it word for word."

After that I met Tree many times and he never forgot that little service. In return he invited me to the Garrick Club, or to his great room at the top of His Majesty's, and told me innumerable anecdotes which were vastly entertaining. He had a rich store of them, and told them with a ripe humor and dramatic genius which revealed him at his best. His acting was marred by affectations that became exasperating, and sometimes by loss of memory and sheer carelessness. I have seen him actually asleep on the stage. It was when he played the part of Fagin in "Oliver Twist," and in a scene where he had to sit crouched below a bridge, waiting for Bill Sikes, he dozed off, wakened with a start, and missed his cue.

Tree's egotism was almost a disease, and in his last

years his vanity and pretentiousness obscured his real genius. He was a great old showman, and at rehearsals it was remarkable how he could pull a crowd together and build up a big picture or intensify a dramatic moment by some touch of "business." But he played to the gallery all the time, and made a pantomime of Shakespeare —to the horror of the Germans when he appeared in Berlin! They would not tolerate him, and were scandalized that such liberties should be taken with Shakespearian drama, which they have adopted as their own.

Another great figure of the stage whom I met behind the scenes was Sarah Bernhardt, when she appeared at the Coliseum in London. She took the part of Adrienne Lecouvreur, in which she was an unconscionable time a-dying, after storms of agony and mad passion. I had an appointment to meet her in her room after the play, and slipped round behind the scenes before she left the stage. Her exit was astonishing and touching. The whole company of the Coliseum and its variety show—acrobats, jugglers, "funny" men, dancing girls, "star turns"—had lined up in a double row to await this Queen of Tragedy, with homage. As she came off the stage, George Robey, with his red nose and ridiculous little hat, gravely offered his arm, with the air of Walter Raleigh in the presence of Queen Elizabeth. She leaned heavily on his arm, and almost collapsed in the chair to which he led her. She was panting after her prolonged display of agony before the footlights, and for a moment I thought she was really dying.

I bent over her and said in French that I regretted she was so much fatigued. My words angered her instantly, as though they reflected upon her age.

"Sir," she said harshly, "I was as much fatigued when I first played that scene—was it thirty years ago, or forty?—I have forgotten. It is the exhaustion of art. and not of nature."

X

AS a special correspondent of *The Daily Chronicle* (after a spell of free-lance work) I went abroad a good deal on various missions, and occasionally took charge of the Paris office in the absence of Martin Donohue who held that post but was frequently away on some adventure in other countries.

I came to know and to love Paris, by day and night, on both sides of the Seine, and in all its quarters, rich and poor. To me it is still the most attractive city in the world, and I have an abiding passion for its ghosts, its beauty, and its people. To "feel" Paris one must be steeped in the history and literature of France, so that one walks, not lonely, but as a haunted man along the rue St. Honoré, where Danton lived, and where Robespierre closed his shutters when Marie Antoinette passed on her tumbril; in the Palais Royal, where Camille Desmoulins plucked leaves from the trees and stuck them in his hat as a green cockade; in the great nave of Notre Dame, where a thousand years of faith, passion, tragedy, glory, touch one's spirit, closely, as one's hand touches its old stones; across the Pont Neuf, where Henry met his murderer, and where all Paris passed, with its heroes, cutthroats, and fair women; on the left bank, by the bookstalls, where poets and scholars roved, with hungry stomachs and eager minds; up in the Quartier Latin, where centuries of student life have paced by the old gray walls, and where wild youth has lived its short dream of love, quaffed its heady wine, laughed at life and death; up the mountain of Montmartre where *apaches* used to lurk in the darkness, and Vice wore the false livery of Joy; in

the Luxembourg Gardens, where a world of lovers have walked, hand in hand, while children played, and birds twittered, and green buds grew to leaf, which faded and fell as love grew old and died.

Paris is nothing but an exhibition of architecture and a good shopping place, unless one has walked arm in arm with D'Artagnan, seen the great Cardinal pass in his robes, stood behind the arras when Marguérite de Valois supped with her lover, wandered the cold streets o' nights with François Villon, listened to the songs of Ronsard, passed across the centuries to the salons of Madame de Deffand and Madame Geoffrin, supped with the Encyclopædists, and heard the hoarse laughter of the mobs when the head of the Princesse de Lamballe was paraded on a pike, and the fairest heads of France fell under the knife into the basket of the guillotine. It was Dumas, Victor Hugo, Erckmann-Chatriàn, Eugène Sue, Murger, Guy de Maupassant, Michelet's "France," and odd bits of reading in French history, fiction, and poetry, which gave me the atmosphere of Paris, and revealed in its modernity, even in its most squalid aspects, a background of romance.

So it has been with millions of others to whom Paris is an enchanted city. But, as a journalist, I had the chance to get behind the scenes of life in Paris, and to put romance to the test of reality.

One of my earliest recollections of Paris was when I went there for a fortnight with my wife, in the first year of our marriage, on savings from my majestic income of £120 a year. We stayed in a little hotel called the Hôtel du Dauphin, in the rue St. Roch—where Napoleon fired his "whiff of grapeshot"—and explored the city and all its museums with untiring delight, although at that time, during the Dreyfus trial and the Fashoda crisis, England was so unpopular that we—obviously English—were actually insulted in the streets. (It was before the Entente Cordiale!)

One little show was unusual in its character. A fool named Jules Guérin, wanted by the police for not paying his rates, or something of the kind, fortified his house in the rue Chabrol, and defied the whole armed might of Paris to fetch him out. It was a kind of Sidney Street affair, for he was armed with an automatic pistol and fired at any policeman who approached. M. Lépine, the prefect, decided to besiege him and starve him out, and when my wife and I wedged our way through vast crowds, we found the rue Chabrol surrounded by a veritable army of gendarmes. No one was allowed down the street, to the great annoyance of my wife, who desired to see Jules Guérin.

While we were talking together, a woman plucked my wife's sleeve and said in French, "You want to see Guérin? . . . Come with me."

She led us down a number of narrow passages beyond the police cordon until, suddenly, we came into the very center of the deserted street.

"Voilà!" said the woman. "Vous voyez l'imbécile!"

She pointed to an upper window, and there, sure enough, was the "imbecile," Guérin, a sinister-looking fellow with a black beard, with a large revolver very much in evidence. My wife laughed at him, and he looked very much annoyed. . . . It was a full week before he surrendered to the law.

One of the most interesting times I had in Paris was when the Confédération Générale de Travail, under the leadership of Jean Jaurès, declared a general strike against the government of Aristide Briand. It was a trial of strength between those two men, who had once been comrades in the extreme Left of revolutionary labor. Both of them were men of outstanding character. Jaurès was much more than a hot-headed demagogue, of the new Bolshevik type, eager to destroy civilization in revenge against "Capital." He was a lover of France in every

fiber of his body and brain, and a man of many Christian qualities, including kindness and charity and personal morality, in spite of religious scepticism. He saw with clear vision the approaching danger of war with Germany, and he devoted his life, and lost it, on behalf of antimilitarism, believing that German democracy could be won over to international peace, if French democracy would link up with them. It was for that reason that he attacked the three years' system of military service, and denounced the increasing expenditure of France on military preparations. But to attain his ideal of international peace, he played into the hands of revolutionary labor, and defended many of its violent methods, including "direct action." It was with Aristide Briand that he had drawn up the plans of a general strike in which every trade union or syndicate in France would join at the appointed hour, in order to demonstrate the power of "Labor" and to overthrow the autocracy of "Capital."

When Briand deserted the Left Wing, modified his views for the sake of office, and finally became Premier of France, Jaurès, who had taunted him as a renegade, put into operation against him the weapon he had helped to forge. A general strike was declared.

There were astonishing scenes in Paris. The machinery of social life came to a dead stop. No railway trains arrived or departed, and I had a sensational journey from Calais to Paris in the last train through, driven by an amateur who had not mastered the mystery of the brakes, so that the few passengers, with the last supply of milk for Paris, were bumped and jolted with terrifying shocks.

Food from the rural districts was held up on wayside stations, and Paris was like a besieged city, living on rapidly diminishing stocks. The "Metro" ceased work, and armies of clerks, shopgirls, and business men had to walk to their work from suburbs or distant quarters.

They made a joke of it, and laughed and sang on their way, as though it was the greatest jest in the world. But it became beyond a jest after the first day or two, especially at night, when Paris was plunged into abysmal darkness because the electricians had joined the railway men and all other branches of labor.

The restaurants and cafés along the great boulevards were dimly lighted by candles stuck into wine and beer bottles, and bands of students from the Latin Quarter paraded with paper lanterns, singing the Funeral March and other doleful ditties, not without a sense of romance and adventure in that city of darkness. The *apaches,* who love not the light, came out of their lairs, beyond Clichy, and fell upon wanderers in the gloom, robbing them of their watches and ready money, and clubbing them if they put up any resistance. No milk could be had for love or money, no butter, eggs, fish, or fresh meat, except by the rich hotels which cornered the markets with their small supplies brought in by farm carts, hand carts, or babies' perambulators.

On the whole there was very little violence, for, in spite of their excitability, Parisian crowds are good-natured and law-abiding. But there was one section which gave trouble. It was the union of *terrassiers* or day laborers. They knocked off work and strolled down toward the center of Paris in strong bodies, looking dangerous and picturesque in their great loose breeches tucked into their boots, short jackets, and flat bonnets pulled over the right eye. Most of them carried knives or cheap pistols, and they had ancient, traditional grudges against the *agents de police.*

Those simple and admirable men were remarkably polite to them, and generally contrived to keep at a safe distance when they appeared in force. But the mounted police of the Garde Républicaine tried to herd them back from the shopping centers of the city which they threat-

ened to loot, and came into immediate conflict with them. As an observer interested in the drama of life, I several times became unpleasantly mixed up with *terrassiers* and other rash onlookers when the Garde Républicaine rode among them, and I had some narrow escapes from being trampled down.

A hot affair took place round a scaffolding which had been put up for some new building up by Montmartre. The *terrassiers,* driven back by the mounted men who used the flat of their swords, made a stronghold of this place, and loosed off their pistols or flung brickbats at the "enemy," inflicting several casualties. Orders were given to clear out this hornets' nest, and the Garde Républicaine charged right up to the scaffolding and hauled out the ruffians, who were escorted as prisoners through hooting mobs. It was all very exciting, and Paris was beginning to lose its temper.

Jaurès had called a great meeting of *cheminots*—the railway workers—in the *Salle de Manège,* or riding school, down the rue St. Denis. In the interests of *The Daily Chronicle* I decided to attend it. It was in a low quarter of the city, and vast crowds of factory workers and young hooligans surged up and down the street, jeering at the police, and asking for trouble. Far away, above their heads, I could see the steel helmets with their long black plumes of the Garde Républicaine.

A narrow passage led to the *Salle de Manège,* where Jaurès had begun his meeting with an assembly of two thousand railway workers, packed tight, as I could see when the door was opened an inch to give them air. It was guarded by a group of strikers who told me in rough language to clear off, when I asked for admission. One of them, however, caught my remark that I belonged to *The Daily Chronicle.* It impressed him favorably. "I used to read it when I was a hairdresser in Soho," he told me. He opened the door enough for me to step inside.

Presently I was sorry he did. The atmosphere was hellish in its heat and stench, arising from the wet sawdust of the riding school and the greasy clothes of this great crowd of men, densely massed. Jaurès was on the tribune, speaking with a powerful, sonorous voice. I forget his words, but remember his appeal to the men to reveal the nobility of labor by their loyalty and their discipline. He was scornful of the renegade Briand who had sold his soul for office and was ready to use bayonets against the liberties of men whose cause he had once defended with passionate hypocrisy. . . . After an hour of this, I thought I should die of suffocation, and managed to escape.

It was out of the frying pan into the fire, for the crowds in the rue St. Denis were being forced back by the Republican Guard, and I was carried off my feet in the stampede, until I became wedged against the wall of a corner café, with a surging crowd in front. Some one flung a wine bottle at one of the Republican Guards, and unseated him. Immediately the mounted troops rode their horses at the throng outside the café. Tables fell over, chairs were smashed, and a score of men and women fell in a heap through the plate glass windows. There were shrieks of terror, mingled with yells of mirth. I decided to watch the drama, if possible, from a more comfortable observation post, and knocked at the door of one of the tall tenement houses near by. It was opened by a villainous-looking man, shielding the flame of a candle with a filthy hand.

"What do you want?" he asked in French.

"A view from your top window," I said.

He bargained with me sullenly, and I agreed to five francs for a place on his roof. It was worth that money, to me, to see how the poor of Paris sleep in their cheap lodging houses. I went through the rooms on each floor, by way of rickety old stairs, and in each room were

fifteen to twenty people, sitting or lying on iron bedsteads, men in some rooms, women in others. Some of them were sleeping and snoring, others lay half-dressed, reading scraps of newspaper by flickering gas light. Others were undressing, careless of the publicity given to their rags. It was astonishing to me that hardly any of them paid the slightest attention to the scenes in the street below, which were becoming riotous, as I could hear by gusts of noise, in which the shrieks of women mingled with hoarse groans and yells and a kind of sullen chant with the words, *"Hue! Hue! Hue! A bas la police. A bas la police! Hue! Hue! Hue!"*

This house was older than the French Revolution, and I couldn't help thinking that perhaps when the tumbrils were passing on their way to the guillotine, men and women like this were lying abed, or yawning and combing their matted hair, or playing cards by candlelight, as two fellows here, not bothering to glance beyond the windows at such a common sight as another batch of aristocrats going to their death.

From the roof I looked down on the turbulent crowd, charged again and again by the Republican Guards until the street was clear. Presently the *cheminots* came surging out of the *Salle de Manège,* with Jaurès at their head, walking very slowly. The police let Jaurès get past, and then broke up the procession behind him, with needless brutality, as it seemed to me. Many men were knocked down, and fell under the horses' hoofs. Others were beaten by blunt swords.

Not only Paris was in the throes of the general strike, but all France. It was a serious threat to the French government and to the social life of the people. Briand, who had played with revolutionary ideas as a younger man, showed now that he had the wisdom that comes from responsibility, and the courage to apply it. He called certain classes to the colors. If they disobeyed,

it would be treason to the Flag, punishable by death. If they obeyed, it would break the general strike, as they would be ordered, as soldiers, to run the trains, and distribute supplies. It was a great risk to take, threatening civil war, but he took it, believing that few men would refuse obedience to military discipline. He was right, and by this means he crushed the general strike and broke the power of the trade unions.

I interviewed him at that time, and remember my first meeting with that man who afterward, when the World War had ended in the defeat of Germany, held the office of Premier again and endeavored vainly to save France from the ruin which followed victory.

I waited for him, by appointment, in a great salon furnished in the style of Louis XV, with gilded chairs and a marble-topped table at which Napoleon had once sat as Emperor. I was chatting with one of his secretaries, when the door opened, and a tall, heavily built man with large, dark, melancholy eyes, came into the room. He looked at me somberly, and I stared back, not realizing that it was the Prime Minister of France. Then the secretary whispered "Monsieur Briand," and he held out his hand to me. We had a long talk, or, rather, he talked and I listened, impressed by the apparent frankness and simplicity and courage of the man.

He told me how great had been the danger to France from the forces of anarchy let loose by the Confédération Générale de Travail by their action of the general strike, and he defended the policy by which he had broken that threat against the authority of government. He did not disguise from me that he had risked not only his political life and reputation, but even the very peace and stability of France. But that risk had been necessary, because the alternative would have been a weak and shameful surrender to anarchy and revolution.

Jaurès was beaten, as he deserved to be, on that issue.

His worst defeat was not then, but in August of 1914, when those German Socialists, in whose pacifism and brotherhood of man he had believed, supported the challenge of their war lords against France and Russia, and marched with all the rest toward the French frontier. The whole of Jaurès's life struggle for international peace was made vain by the beating of drums for the greatest war in history. Among his own people there were many, once spellbound by his oratory and loyal to his leadership, who now abused him as the man who had weakened the defenses of France by his antimilitarist influence. There were some, even, who said "Jaurès betrayed us to the Enemy!"

On that night when many nations of Europe answered the call to arms, stupefied, conscious of enormous terrors approaching all human life, hearing already, in imagination, the thunder of a world of guns that had not yet opened fire, I paced the streets of Paris with a friend, wondering how soon he and I would be caught up in that death struggle.

"Let us turn in at the *Croissant,*" he said. "We must eat, though the world goes mad."

It was late, and when we arrived at the restaurant in the rue Montmartre, it was closed and guarded by police.

"What has happened?" I asked, and some one in the crowd answered with intense emotion:

"Jaurès is assassinated! He was shot there, as he sat at dinner."

He was shot from behind a curtain, in a plush-covered seat where often I had sat, by some young man who believed that, in killing Jaurès, he was helping to secure the victory of France.

I saw his funeral *cortège.* They gave him a great funeral. Ministers of France, men of all parties, dignitaries of the Church, marched behind his coffin, and be-

hind the red flags which were blown by a strong wind. It was not love for him, but fear of the people which caused that demonstration at his burial. It was an appeal for that *Union Sacrée* of all classes by which alone the menace to the life of France might be resisted. There need have been no fear. There was hardly a man in France who did not offer his life as a willing sacrifice, in that war which seemed not only against France and her friends, but against civilization itself and all humanity. So the *poilus* believed, with simple faith, unshaken by any doubt—in the peaceful policy of France and the unprovoked aggression of Germany.

The restaurant in which Jaurès was killed—the *Croissant,* with the sign of the Turkish Crescent—was one of the few in Paris open all night for the use of journalists who slept by day. Needless to say, other night birds, even more disreputable, found this place a pleasant sanctuary in the wee sma' hours. I went there often for some meal which might have been dinner, lunch, or breakfast, any time between 2 and 5 A.M. I was with my colleague, Henri Bourdin, during the Italian war in Tripoli.

Our job was to receive long dispatches over the telephone, from Italian correspondents, and transmit them by telephone to London. It was a maddening task, because after very few minutes of conversation, the telephone cut us off from one of the Italian cities, or from London, and only by curses and prayers and passionate pleading to lady operators could we establish contact again.

Though the war in Tripoli was a trivial episode, wiped out in our memory by another kind of war, the Italian correspondents wrote millions of words about every affair of outposts—all of which streamed over the telephone in florid Italian. I had a Sicilian who translated that Italian into frightful French, which I, in turn, translated into

somewhat less frightful English, and conveyed by telephone to London.

It went on hour after hour, day after day, and night after night, especially from a man named Bevione. I hated his eloquence so much that I made a solemn vow to kill him, if ever I met him in the flesh. . . . I met him in Bulgaria, during another war, but he was so charming that I forgave him straightway for all the agony he had inflicted on me. Besides, undoubtedly, he would have killed me first.

The Sicilian was a marvel. Between the telephone calls he narrated all his love affairs since the age of fourteen, and they were innumerable. During the telephone calls, it was he who pleaded with the lady operators not to cut him off, or to get his call again. He punctuated every sentence with a kiss. "Madonna! . . . Bacio! . . . Bacio!" He gave these unknown beauties (perhaps they were as ugly as sin!) a million kisses over the telephone wires, and by this frenzy of amorous demonstration seriously disturbed the Paris exchange, and held up all our rivals.

Henri Bourdin, in intervals of waiting, used to make the time pass by acting all the most famous dramas of the modern French stage, and I vow that this single man used to give me the illusion of having seen the entire company of the Comédie Française, so vivid were his character studies and descriptions.

Abandoning the Sicilian to any opportunities of love he might find beyond the telephone receiver, Bourdin and I used to leave the office on the Boulevard des Capucines just as the light of dawn was creeping into the streets of Paris, when the *chiffonniers* picked at the rags in the dustbins, and pale ladies of the night passed like ghosts to their lodgings in mean streets.

We made our way sometimes to the markets—*Les Halles*—where the women of the Revolution used to

gather with their knitting and their gossip of the latest heads to fall in the basket of the guillotine. Many of the houses round about belong to that period, and Bourdin and I used to take coffee in old eating and drinking houses like the *"Chien qui Fume"* (The Dog Who Smokes), which still have on their walls the iron brackets for the lanterns on which French aristocrats were hanged by infuriated mobs, in 1793.

They were still frequented by strange and sinister-looking characters. I remember one group, certainly as queer as any I have seen. Bourdin and I were seated at table when they came in excitedly—about thirty men and women, all laughing and jabbering. The men wore long hair, very wild and unkempt, with flowing black ties of "La Vallière" style. The women had short hair, cut with straight fringes. Presently another man appeared, astoundingly like Ary Scheffer's study of Our Lord, with long pale hair, and straw-colored beard, and watery blue eyes. At his coming, the company became delirious with enthusiasm, while he went gravely round the circle and kissed each man and woman on the lips.

It was Bourdin who explained to me the mystery of these fantastic creatures. They belonged to the most advanced Anarchist society in Paris. The man who appeared last had just been acquitted by the French courts on a charge of kidnapping and locking up one of his fellow anarchists, who had betrayed the society to the police.

The only time in which I myself have been in the hands of the French police was in the early days of the war, while I was waiting in Paris for my papers as accredited war correspondent with the British Armies in the field. This unpleasant experience was due to my ceaseless curiosity in life and the rash acceptance of a casual invitation.

A friend of mine had become acquainted with two ladies who sang at "Olympia," and I happened to be in a

taxicab with him when they approached the door of his vehicle as we alighted.

It was eleven o'clock at night, and it was murmured by the two ladies that they were going to a "reception" at some apartment near the Étoile—a most aristocratic neighborhood. They would be delighted if we accompanied them. I was tired, and did not wish to go, but my friend Brown, always fresh at midnight, saw amusement ahead, and begged me to come.

"For an hour, then," I said.

In the cab on the way to the Étoile, Brown sang mock Italian opera with one of the ladies, who had an excellent voice and a sense of humor. I exchanged a few remarks with the other lady, and was slightly disturbed by the somewhat German accent with which she spoke French.

Certainly, the apartment in which presently we found ourselves, in an avenue by the Étoile, was extremely elegant, and crowded with men and women in evening dress, who looked highly respectable. Among them were a few French officers in uniform and one English officer. The hostess was a charming-looking lady, with snow-white hair. There was a little music, a little dancing, and polite conversation. It was decorous and dull.

At the end of an hour I spoke to Brown.

"I've had enough of this. I'm off."

He informed me in a whisper that if I went I should be losing something very good in the way of an adventure.

"This is, undoubtedly, one of the most criminal haunts in Paris," he said. "I can smell abomination! Something melodramatic will happen before long, or I'll eat my hat."

I was surprised, and alarmed. I had no desire to be at home in a criminal haunt in time of war. I decided even more firmly to go, and went to take leave of the charming lady with the snow-white hair.

She seemed vexed that I should desire to go so soon,

but seeing that I was decided, made a somewhat curious request.

"Do you mind going out by the garden entrance—through the French windows? We do not care to show lights through the front door. *C'est la guerre!*"

I went out through the garden entrance, followed by Brown, who said I was missing the fun.

It was dark in the garden, and I stumbled on the way to a little garden gate, twenty yards away from the house.

As I put my hand on the latch of the gate, I was aware of a large number of black shadows coming toward me out of the bushes beyond. Instinctively I beat a hasty retreat back to the house. Something had happened to it. Where the French windows had been was now a steel door. Brown was doing something mysterious, bending low and making pencil marks on a white slab of the wall.

"What's up?" I asked.

"I'm identifying the house, in case of future need," he answered.

I made a tattoo with my stick against the steel door. My one foolish desire was to get back into the house, away from those black figures outside the garden gate. It was too late. Directly I knocked on the door, a score of them rushed into the garden, and I was seized and carried in strong arms until, at a considerable distance, I was dumped down under the Eiffel Tower, in charge of a dozen *agents de police*. Groups of men and women in evening dress, some of whom I recognized as visitors at the reception of the charming lady with the snow-white hair, were also in charge of strong bodies of police. My friend Brown was a prisoner some twenty yards away. It was a cold night, but, philosophically, to the amazement of the French police, he lay down on the grass and went to sleep.

We were kept under the Eiffel Tower for two hours, at the end of which time a motor car drew up, with a

gentleman wearing the tricolor sash of a French prefect. It was for him that we had been waiting. Strangely enough, we were all taken back to the apartment from which we had come, and there each person was subjected to an examination by the prefect and his assistants. There was evident terror among the men and women who had passed the evening in the house of mystery.

Brown and I were liberated after an inspection of our passports. On the way home I asked Brown for a little explanation, for I could understand nothing of the business.

He understood perfectly.

"That place was a gambling den. The police were looking for German spies, as well as French officers absent without leave. I told you we should see something worth while!"

I confess I did not think it worth while. I had had a nasty fright, caught a bad cold, and missed a good night's sleep.

But it was certainly a little bit of melodrama, which one may find in Paris more easily than in any city in the world.

XI

AFTER the revolution in Portugal, which led to the exile of King Manuel and the overthrow of the Royalist *régime* in favor of a republic under the presidency of Affonso Costa, I was asked by Lord Lytton to go out and report upon the condition of the prisons in that country.

They were packed with Royalists and with all people, of whatever political opinion, who disapproved of the principles and methods of the new government, including large numbers of the poorest classes. Sinister stories had leaked through about the frightful conditions of these political prisoners, and public opinion in England was stirred when the Dowager Duchess of Bedford, who had visited Portugal, published some sensational statements. I suspected that the dear old Duchess of Bedford was influenced a good deal by sentiment for the Royalist cause, although when I saw her she was emphatic in saying that she had never met King Manuel and was moved to take action for purely humanitarian reasons. Lord Lytton, a man of liberal and idealistic mind, was certainly not actuated by the desire for Royalist or anti-republican propaganda, and in asking me to make an investigation on behalf of a committee, he made it clear that he wished to have the true facts, uncolored by prejudice. On that condition I agreed to go.

I found, before going, that the moving spirit behind the accusations of cruelty appearing in the British press against the new rulers of Portugal, and behind the Duchess of Bedford, was a little lady named Miss Tenison.

"She has all the facts in her hands," said Lord Lytton, "and you ought to have a talk with her. You will have to make a long journey."

I made the journey to a remote part of England, where I found a very ancient little house, unchanged by any passing of time through many centuries. I was shown into a low, long room, haunted, I am certain, by the ghosts of Tudor and Stuart England. Two elderly ladies, who introduced themselves as Miss Tenison's aunts, sat on each side of a mediæval fireplace. Presently Miss Tenison appeared and for more than a moment—for all the time of my visit—I imagined myself in the presence of one of those ghosts which should properly inhabit a house like this—a young lady in an old-fashioned dress, so delicate, so transparent, so spiritual, that I had the greatest difficulty in accepting her as an inhabitant of this coarse and material world.

She was entirely absorbed in the Portuguese affairs, and her aunts told me that she dreamed at night about the agony of the Royalist prisoners in their dungeons. She was in correspondence with many Royalist refugees, and with those still hiding in Portugal, from whom she obtained the latest news. She had a romantic admiration—though not knowing him personally—for a certain count, who had led a counter-revolution and had been captured sword in hand, before being flung into prison and treated as a common convict. She hated Affonso Costa, the President, as Russian *emigrés* afterward hated Lenin.

It was from this little lady, ethereal in appearance but as passionate in purpose as Lytton Strachey's Florence Nightingale, that I gained my first insight into the Portuguese situation and my letters of introduction to some great people still hiding in Lisbon. I left her house with the sense of having begun a romantic adventure, with this remarkable little lady in the first chapter.

The second chapter of my adventure was fantastic, for I found myself in the wilds of Spain, suddenly responsible for a German wife and six bandboxes filled with the lingerie of six Brazilian beauties. . . . It sounds incredible, but it is true.

It happened that a tunnel fell down on the engine of a train immediately ahead of the one in which I was traveling through northern Spain on the way to Lisbon. This brought our train to a standstill in a rather desolate spot. There was vast excitement, and a babble of tongues. Most of the travelers were on their way to Lisbon, to catch a boat to Brazil which was leaving the following day. Among them was a stout little German, with a large, plump, and sad-looking wife. Neither of them could speak anything but German, but the husband, who was almost apoplectic with rage and anxiety, seemed to divine by intuition that a local train which halted at the wayside station might go somewhere in the direction of Lisbon. Entirely forgetting his wife, or thinking, perhaps that she would follow him whithersoever he went, he sprang on to the footboard of the local train, and scrambled in just as it steamed away. So there I was with the German wife, to whom I had previously addressed a few words, and who now appealed to me for advice, protection, and something to eat. The poor lady was hungry, and her husband had the money. Highly embarrassed, because I knew not how long I should be in the company of this German *Hausfrau,* I provided her with some food at the buffet, and endeavored to get some news of the best manner to reach Lisbon.

Then the second blow befell me. Six extraordinarily beautiful Brazilian girls, with large black eyes and flashing teeth, did exactly the same thing as the German gentleman. That is to say, they hurled themselves into a local train just as it was starting away. Six heads screamed out of the carriage window. They were scream-

ing at me. It was a wild appeal that I should rescue the six enormous bandboxes which they had left on the platform, and bring them to a certain hotel in Lisbon. So there I was, with the bandboxes and the German wife.

I duly arrived in Lisbon, after a nightmare journey, with all my responsibilities, and handed over the bandboxes to the Brazilian beauties, and the German wife to the German husband. I obtained no gratitude whatever in either case.

In Lisbon I plunged straightway into a life of romance and tragedy, which was strangely reminiscent of all I had read about the French Revolution.

With my letters of introduction I called at several great houses of the old nobility, which seemed to be utterly abandoned. At least, no lights showed through the shutters, and they were all bolted and barred within their courtyards. At one house, in answer to my knocking, and the ringing of a bell which jangled loudly, there came at last an answer. A little door in the wall was cautiously opened on a chain by an old man servant with a lantern. Upon mentioning my name, and the word "Inglese," which I hoped was good Portuguese for "English," the door was opened wider, and the man made a sign for me to follow him. I was led into a great mansion, perfectly dark, except for the lantern ahead, and I went up a marble staircase, and then into a large salon, furnished in the style of the French Empire, with portraits on the walls of eighteenth century ladies and gentlemen in silks and brocades. In such a room as this Marie Antoinette might have sat with her ladies before the women of the markets marched to Versailles.

The old man servant touched a button, and flooded the room with the light of the electric candelabra, making sure first that no gleam of it would get through the heavy curtains over the shutters. Then he left the room, and

soon afterward appeared an old lady in a black dress with a white shawl over her shoulders.

She was the aunt of one of the great families of Portugal, some of whom had escaped to England, and others of whom were in the prisons of Lisbon. She spoke harshly, in French, of the base and corrupt character of the new Portuguese Republic, and of the cruelties and indignities suffered by the political prisoners. She lived quite alone in the old mansion, not caring to go out because of the insults she would receive in the streets, but otherwise safe. So far, at least, Affonso Costa and his police had not threatened her liberty or her possessions.

In another house in the outskirts of Lisbon, with a beautiful garden, where the warm air was filled with the scent of flowers in masses of rich color, I met another lady of the old *régime,* a beautiful girl, living solitary, also, and agonized because of the imprisonment and ill treatment of her relatives. She implored me to use what influence I had, as an English journalist, to rescue those unhappy men.

It was my mission to get into the prisons, and see what were the real conditions of captivity there. After frequent visits to the Foreign Office, I received permits to visit the Penetenciaria and the Limoero, in which most of the political prisoners were confined. The guide who went with me told me that the Republic had nothing to hide, and that I could see everything and talk as much as I liked with the captives. He was certain that I should find the Penetenciaria, at least, a model prison. The other was "rather old-fashioned."

On the whole, I preferred the old-fashioned prison. The "model prison" seemed to me specially and beautifully designed to drive men mad and kill their humanity. It was spotlessly clean and provided with excellent sanitary arrangements, washhouses, bakehouses, kitchens,

and workshops, but the whole system of the prison was ingeniously and, to my mind, devilishly constructed to keep each prisoner, except a favored few, in perpetual solitude. Once put into one of those little white cells, down one of the long white corridors, and a man would never see or talk with a fellow mortal again until his term of penal servitude expired, never again, if he had a life sentence. There were men in that place who had already served ten, or fifteen, or twenty years. Through a hole in the door they received their food or their day's ration of work. To exercise them, a trap was opened at the end of their cell, so that they could walk out, like a captive beast, into a little strip of courtyard, divided by high walls from the strip on either side. Up above was the open sky, and the sunlight fell aslant upon the white-coated walls, but it was a cramped and barren space for a man's body and soul. Perhaps it was no worse than other European prisons, possibly much better. But it struck me with a cold horror, because of all those living beings isolated, in lifelong silence, entombed.

One corridor was set apart for the political prisoners, and when I saw them they were allowed to have their cell doors open, and to converse with each other, for a short time. Otherwise they, too, were locked in their separate cells. I spoke with a number of them, all men of high-sounding names and titles, but a melancholy, pale, miserable-looking crowd, whose spirits seemed quite broken by their long captivity. They were mostly young men, and among them was the Portuguese count who had led the counter-revolutionary rising and had been captured by the Republican troops. They had one grievance, of which they all spoke passionately. The Republic might have shot them as Royalists. At least that would have enabled them to die like gentlemen. But it had treated them like common criminals and convicts, and had even forced them to wear convict garb, to have their heads

shaved, and to wear the hood with only eyeholes which was part of the dress—horrible in its cruelty—of all long-sentence men. My conversation with most of them was in French, but two young brothers of very noble family spoke excellent English. They seemed to regard my visit as a kind of miracle, and it revived hopes in them which made me pitiful, because I had no great expectation of gaining their release. When I went away from them, they returned to their cells, and the steel doors clanked upon them.

In the prison called the Limoero there were different conditions of life, enormously preferable, I thought, to the Penetenciaria, in spite of its filth and dirt and disease. There was no solitary confinement here, but crowds of men and women living in a hugger-mugger way, with free intercourse between their rooms. They were allowed to receive visitors at stated times, and when I was there the wives of many of the prisoners had come, with their babies and parcels of food. The babies were crawling on the floor, the food was being cooked on oil stoves, and there was a fearful stench of unwashed bodies, fried onions, tobacco smoke, and other strong odors.

The Fleet Prison, as described by Charles Dickens, must have closely resembled this place, in its general system of accommodation and social life, and I saw in many faces there the misery, the haggard lines, the despair, which he depicts among those who had been long suffering inmates of that debtors' jail.

Many of the men here were of the aristocratic and intellectual classes, among them editors and correspondents of Royalist papers, poets, novelists, and university professors. They had not been charged with any crime, they had not been brought up for trial, they had no idea how long their captivity would last—a few months, a few years, or until death released them. But at least in equal proportion to the Royalists—I think in a

majority—were men of poorer class—mechanics, printers, tailors, shoemakers, artisans of all kinds. They, too, were political prisoners, having been Socialists, Syndicalists, and other types of advanced democrats.

Some of the men told me that they had no idea whatever why they were lodged in Limoero. They had been arrested without charge, flung into prison without trial, and kept there without hope of release. Quite a number of them had been imprisoned by the Royalist *régime* in the time of the monarchy, and the Republic had not troubled about them. They were just left to rot, year after year.

The political prisoners were allowed to receive food from their relatives, but many had no relatives able to provide them, and they had nothing but prison fare, which was hardly enough for life. They begged through the bars of the windows to passers-by, as I saw them, with their hands thrust through the iron gratings. Owing to the overcrowding and insanitary conditions, disease was rife, and prison fever ravaged them.

I had been told of one prison called Forte Mon Santo, on a hill some distance away from Lisbon, and as I could get no official pass to visit it, I decided to try and gain admission by other means. In the Black Horse Square at Lisbon, I hired a motor car from one of the street drivers, and understood from him that he was the champion automobilist of Lisbon. Certainly he drove like a madman and a brute. He killed three dogs on the way, not by accident, but by deliberately steering into them, and laughed uproariously at each kill. He drove through crowded streets with a screeching horn, and in the open countryside went like a fiend, up hill and down dale. I was surprised to find myself alive on the top of the hill which, as I knew by private directions, was the prison of Mon Santo.

But I could see no prison. No building of any kind

stood on the lonely hilltop or on its slopes, which were bare of all but grass. All I could see was a circle of queer-looking objects like large metal mushrooms. Upon close inspection I saw that these things were ventilators for a subterranean building, and walking further, I came to a steep, circular ditch, into which some steps were cut. At the top of the steps stood a sentry with a rifle slung over his arm.

I approached this man, who regarded me suspiciously and unslung his rifle, but the glint of a gold sovereign—we used to have such things before the era of paper money—persuaded him that I was an agreeable fellow. My brutal motor driver, who spoke a bit of French, so that he understood my purpose, explained to the sentry that I was an English tourist who would like to see his excellent prison. After some debate, and a roving eye over the surrounding landscape, the sentry nodded, and made a sign for me to go down the steps, with the motor driver. I noticed that during all the time of my visit he walked behind us, with his rifle handy, lest there should be any trick on our part.

It was the most awful dungeon I have ever seen, apart from ancient dens disused since mediæval times. Completely underground, its dungeons struck me with a chill even in the short time I was there. Its walls oozed with water. No light came direct through the narrow bars of the cells in which poor wretches lay like beasts, but only indirectly from the surrounding ditch, so that they were almost in darkness. In the center of this underground fort was a cavern in complete darkness except, perhaps, for some faint gleam through a grating about two feet square, high up in the outer wall. It was just a hole in the rock, and inside were five men with heavy chains about them. Once a day the jailers pushed some loaves of bread through the grating. What went on in that dark dungeon, and in the darkness of those men's souls,

it is better, perhaps, not to imagine. The cruelty of men is not yet killed, and there are still, in the hearts of men and of nations, lurking devils worse than the wildness and ferocity of beasts. . . .

I went to other prisons in Lisbon and Oporto. They were not like that, but, generally, like the Limoero, unclean, squalid, horrible, but with human companionship, which alleviates all suffering, if there is any kind of comradeship. In these cases one could not charge the Portuguese Republic with inflicting bodily suffering upon their prisoners in any deliberate way. The indictment against them was that, under the fair name of liberty, they had overthrown the monarchical *régime* and substituted a new tyranny. For, among all the people I met, there were few who had been charged with any offense against the law, or given the right of defense in any trial.

A queer fellow came into my life during this time in Portugal, whose behavior still baffles me by its mystery. The episode is like the beginning of a sensational detective story, without any clue to its solution.

The first night of my arrival in Lisbon I dined alone in the hotel, and soon remarked a handsome, well-dressed, English-looking man who kept glancing in my direction. After dinner he came up to me and said: "Excuse me, but isn't your name Jones? I think I had the pleasure of meeting you in London, some months ago?"

"A mistake," I said, civilly; "my name is not Jones."

He looked disappointed when I showed no signs of desiring further conversation, and went away. But presently, after studying the hotel list (as I have no doubt), he returned, and with a very genial smile, said: "Oh, forgive me! I made a mistake in the name. You are Philip Gibbs, I believe. I met you at the Savage Club."

I knew he was lying, for I seldom forget a face, and not such a face as his, very powerful and arresting, but as I was bored with my own company, I gave him a little

rope. We took coffee together, and talked about the affairs of the world and the countries in which we had wandered. He had been to South America and other countries, and told me some very amusing yarns. I was much taken with this man, who was certainly well-educated and a brilliant talker.

The mystery appeared when he tapped at my door next morning, and said he desired to ask a favor.

I expected him to borrow money, but what he wanted was less expensive, and more extraordinary. He wanted me to go to the seashore near Cascaes and bring back to him a handful of pebbles. As he could not pay for such a service from a man in my position, he would gladly make me a friendly gift of anything that might strike my fancy in the shops of Lisbon.

No questioning of mine as to the meaning of this extraordinary request brought any explanation. He regretted that he could not enlighten me as to his reason, but for him the matter was of vital importance. I utterly refused to fetch the pebbles or to go anywhere near the seashore. It flashed across my mind that this very handsome, English-looking gentleman might be a police spy set to dog my footsteps. He certainly dogged me all right. I could hardly get away from him, wherever I went, and he pressed me to take wine with him at the open-air cafés. One night when we sat together in Black Horse Square, he became uneasy, and kept glancing over his shoulder at the crowded tables. Presently he rose, and said, "Let us take a stroll." I agreed, and was quickly aware that we were being followed by three men.

I spoke to him.

"One of us is being shadowed. Is it you or me?"

"Me," he said. "As long as you stay with me, I am safe. Let us slip into this place. . . ."

He pushed open the swing door of a wine shop, and we went inside. He ordered a bottle of cheap wine, and

before it had been brought, three men entered and sat near the door.

My strange acquaintance sipped a little wine, spoke to me loudly in English about the weather, and whispered the words, "Follow me quickly!"

He rose from the table, and went rapidly out of the back door of the restaurant into the courtyard, and out through a side door into the street by which we had entered. It was dark, but as we walked we saw, at the end of the street, under a lantern, three men standing motionless.

"Hell!" said my acquaintance.

He plunged into a narrow alley, and then through a labyrinth of little streets until suddenly we emerged on the square opposite our hotel.

"How's that for geographical knowledge?" he asked.

"Good!" I said. "But after this I do not desire your company. I don't understand why these men followed you, and I don't like the game, anyhow."

He regretted my annoyance, and was so polite and amusing that I relented toward him, especially as he told me he was going to Vigo next day.

He wished me good-by that night when he went to bed. But next morning when I left Lisbon for Oporto, he was on the platform, and said that he had changed his plans and was going to the same place as myself.

I was now convinced that he was really shadowing me, and told him so. But he shook his head and laughed.

"Nothing of the kind. I like your company, because you're the only Englishman in this land of dagoes. Also I want you to get me that handful of pebbles."

He returned again to the subject of those ridiculous pebbles. I could get them easily for him on the seashore by Oporto. It would give me very little trouble. It would be an enormous favor to him. . . . I refused to consider the idea.

In Oporto he took me into a jeweler's shop and bought a little cedarwood box about five inches square.

"I want enough pebbles to fill this box," he said. "Surely you can get them for me?"

"Surely you can get them yourself," I answered.

But he shook his head, and said that was impossible.

We were again followed down the streets of Oporto. My companion drew my attention to the fact, and then sidestepped into an umbrella shop. But he did not buy an umbrella. He bought a very neat, and rather expensive, sword stick, and offered to give me another like it.

"It may be useful," he remarked.

I declined the sword stick, but accepted the thick cudgel which he had been carrying since I knew him.

That is practically the end of the story. He left Oporto two days later, and before going made one last request. It was that I should send a telegram which he had written out, to an address in South Kensington. It was to the following effect:

"Arriving in London Saturday. Cannot get the pebbles."

What is the meaning of that mystery? I cannot give a guess, and have sometimes thought of offering the problem to Conan Doyle.

Sometimes, also, I have wondered whether it is in any way connected with an incident that took place in the abandoned palace of King Manuel, or rather, in his garden. From the newspaper reports it appeared that some of the royal jewels had been buried before the flight of King Manuel. Perhaps it was for the purpose of digging for them that three men, of whom one was believed to be an Englishman, had entered the palace garden on the night of my arrival in Lisbon. A sentry had discovered them and fired. The men fired back, and the sentry was wounded, before they escaped over the wall.

Was that man "believed to be an Englishman" my mysterious acquaintance? I am tempted to think so, yet I

cannot provide a theory for the pebbles from the seashore, the jewel box, the shadowing in the streets of Lisbon, the purchase of the sword stick, and the eagerness for my company.

All that has nothing to do with the political prisoners and my mission of inquiry. The end of that story is that after the publication of my articles in *The Daily Chronicle,* and many papers on the Continent, Affonso Costa declared a general amnesty and the prison doors were unlocked for a great "jail-delivery" of Royalists.

How far my articles had any influence toward that action, I do not know. Certainly I received some share in the credit, and for months afterward there were Portuguese visitors at my little house in Holland Street, to kiss my hand—as the deliverer of their relatives and friends—much to the amusement of my wife.

But the real deliverer of the prisoners was little Miss Tenison, who had pulled all the wires from her haunted house.

XII

EVER since I can remember I have lived in the company of men and women of a "literary" turn of mind, who either gained a livelihood by writing or used their pens as a means of augmenting other forms of income. My memory, therefore, is a long portrait gallery of authors, novelists, and journalists, many of whom, however, as I must immediately confess, were utterly unknown to fame, and entirely without fortune.

My own father was an essayist and novelist in his spare time as a Civil Servant in the Board of Education, where, in those good old days of leisured life, he worked from eleven till four—not, I suspect, in a very exacting way. Anyhow, it was noticed by his sons that whenever they called upon him in his office, he was either washing his hands, or discussing life and literature with his colleagues. A man of overflowing imagination, enormous range of reading, passionate interest in all aspects of humanity, and most vivacious wit and eloquence, it was a brutal tragedy that he should have been fettered to the soul-destroying drudgery of a government office. But he gathered round him many worshipful friends, and was a popular figure in one of the oldest literary haunts of London, still "going strong" as The Whitefriars Club.

As a young boy in an Eton collar, I used to dine with him there, filled with reverence and delight because I sat at table with the literary giants of the day. To my father, whose genial imagination exaggerated the genius of his friends, they were all "giants," but I expect the world, and even Fleet Street, has forgotten most of them by now. To me, the greatest of them were G. A. Henty, a

grand old man with a beard like Father Christmas, who rewrote French and English history in delectable romance —does anyone read him now?—George Manville Fenn, the author of innumerable books of which I cannot remember a single title—O, fleeting time!—and Ascot Hope Moncrieff, who, under his first two names, was the very first editor of *The Boy's Own Paper*—surely a thousand years ago!—and the author of the most entrancing boys' books, and many serious and scholarly volumes.

This fine old man, who is still producing books, was our intimate friend at home, in early days, when a great family of brothers and sisters, of whom I came fifth, welcomed him with real honor and affection.

Another of my father's friends, whom I used to think the wisest man in the whole world, was a little old gentleman of the distinguished name of Smith, who died the other day (getting a paragraph in *The Times*), having devoted his whole life to a work on The Co-ordination of Knowledge. It was his simple and benign ambition to classify every scrap of knowledge since the beginning of the world's history to the present time, by a card index system. He died, after fifty years of labor, with that task uncompleted!

I had the opportunity of meeting one character at The Whitefriars' Club, who is still famous in Fleet Street, though he is like an ancient ghost. This was an old Shakespearian actor named O'Dell, who used to play the part of the gravedigger in "Hamlet," and the clown in "As You Like It," sixty years and more ago. Under the title of "The Last of the Bohemians," he had a privileged place at the Whitefriars, which he was always the last man to leave for some unknown destination, popularly supposed to be a seat on the Thames Embankment because of his extreme penury. He wore a sombrero hat and a big black cloak in the old style of tragic actors. It

was this costume and his ascetic face which led to a bet between the conductor and driver of an old horse bus passing down Fleet Street, before the time of motor cars.

"I say, Bill," said the conductor, "who d'yer think we 'ave aboard?"

"Dunno," said the driver.

"Cardinal Manning! S'welp me Bob!"

"No blooming fear! That ain't the Cardinal."

"Well, I'll bet a tanner on it."

At the Adelphi the conductor leaned over O'Dell as he descended with grave dignity, and said:

"Beg yer pardon, sir, but do you 'appen to be Cardinal Manning?"

"Go to hell and burn there!" said O'Dell in his sepulchral voice.

Joyously the conductor mounted the steps and called to the driver.

"I've won that bet, Bill. It is 'is 'Oliness!"

There are many such stories about O'Dell, who had a biting wit and a reckless tongue. He is now, like Colonel Newcome in his last years, a Brother of the Charterhouse, in a confraternity of old indigent gentlemen who say their prayers at night and dine together in hall. Among the historic characters of Fleet Street he will always have a place and I am glad to have met that link between the present and the past.

Among my literary friends as a young man was, first and foremost—after my father, who was always inspiring and encouraging—my own brother, who reached the heights of success (dazzling and marvelous to my youthful eyes) under the name of Cosmo Hamilton.

After various flights and adventures, including a brief career on the stage, he wrote a book called *Which is Absurd,* and after it had been rejected by many publishers, placed it on the worst possible terms with Fisher Unwin. It made an immediate hit, and refused to stop selling.

After that success he went straight on without a check, writing novels, short stories, and dramatic sketches which established him as a new humorist, and then, achieving fortune as well as fame, entered the musical comedy world with "The Catch of the Season," "The Beauty of Bath," and other great successes, which he is still maintaining with unabated industry and invention. He and I were close "pals," as we still remain, and, bad form as it may seem to write about my brother, I honestly think there are few men who have his prodigality of imagination, his overflowing storehouse of plots, ideas, and dramatic situations, his eternal boyishness of heart—which has led him into many scrapes, given him hard knocks, but never taught him the caution of age, or moderated his sense of humor—his wildness of exaggeration, his generous good nature, or the sentiment and romance which he hides under the laughing mask of a cynic. In character he and I are the poles apart, but I owe him much in the way of encouragement, and his praise has always been first and overwhelming when I have made any small success. As a young man I used to think him the handsomest fellow in England, and I fancy I was not far wrong.

As a journalist, it was natural that my most familiar friends should be of that profession, and therefore not necessarily famous as men of letters, unless they broke away from the limitations of newspaper work. They are still those for whom I have most affection—H. W. Nevinson, Beach Thomas, Percival Phillips, H. M. Tomlinson, Robin Littlewood the dramatic critic; Ernest Perris, editor of *The Daily Chronicle;* Bulloch, editor of *The Graphic;* all good men and true, and others less renowned.

One comrade who has "gone west," as they used to say in time of war, was a brilliant young Jew named Alphonse Courlander. I used to meet him, at home and abroad, on all sorts of missions, and wherever we were,

we used to get away from the crowd to talk of the books we were going to write (and for the most part never wrote!) and the latest masterpieces we had discovered. Alphonse had more of a Latin than a Jewish temperament, with irresistible gayety and wit, which concealed a profound melancholy. It was when he had drunk one glass too much, or perhaps two, that his melancholy surged up, and he used to shed tears over his poor little naked soul. Otherwise, he had gifts of comic speech and mimicry, which used to make me laugh outrageously, sometimes in the most solemn places. One trick of his was to make the face of a codfish, which was beyond all words funny, and in order to upset my gravity, he used to do this in the presence of royalty, or at some heavy political function, or even during a walk down Pall Mall.

I remember one night in Ireland, when we supped with a party of Irish journalists in a little eating house called Mooney's Oyster Bar. A young Irish girl was playing the fiddle in the courtyard outside, and we called her in, and bribed her to play old Irish ballads, which are so pitiful with the old tragedy of the race that Alphonse the Jew was touched to his heartstrings and vowed that he was descended from the kings of Ireland.

He was with me during the episode in Copenhagen with Doctor Cook, in whom he had a passionate and chivalrous belief, until I shook his faith so much that he sent messages to his paper saying that Cook was a liar, and then later messages to say that he wasn't. Courlander could write in any kind of style which impressed his imagination for a time, and his novels ranged from imitations of Thomas Hardy and R. L. Stevenson, to W. W. Jacobs. But his best book—really fine—was a novel on Fleet Street called *Mightier Than the Sword,* when he wrote about the things he knew and felt. In giving me a copy, he was generous enough to write that

I was its godfather, through my own novel *The Street of Adventure*. Poor Alphonse Courlander was a victim of war's enormous agony, and his end was tragic, but in Fleet Street he left no single enemy, and many friends.

For several years while I was in Fleet Street, I lived opposite Battersea Park, in a row of high dwellings stretching for about a mile, and called Overstrand Mansions, Prince of Wales Mansions, and York Mansions. Nearly all the people in the road were of literary, artistic, or theatrical avocations, either hoping to arrive at fame and fortune, or reduced in circumstances after brief glory. The former class were in the great majority, and were youngish people, with youngish wives, and occasionally, but not often, a baby on the balcony. G. K. Chesterton, who lived in the Overstrand Mansions, immediately over my head—I used to pray to God that he would not fall through—once remarked that if he ever had the good fortune to be shipwrecked on a desert island, he would like it to be with the entire population of the Prince of Wales Road, whom he thought the most interesting collection of people in the world. I thought so, too, and wrote a very bad novel about them, called *Intellectual Mansions, S. W.* That book appeared in the time of the militant suffragettes who were playing hell in London, and as my chief lady character happened to be a suffragette, they claimed it as their own, bought up the whole edition, bound it in their colors of purple, green, and white, and killed it stone dead.

I came to know G. K. Chesterton at that time, and every time I saw him admired more profoundly his great range of knowledge, his immense wit and fancy, his genial, jolly, and passionately sincere idealism. From my ground-floor flat, every morning at ten I used to observe a certain ritual in his life. There appeared an old hansom cab, with an old horse and an old driver. This would be kept waiting for half an hour. Then G. K. C.

would descend, a spacious and splendid figure in a big cloak and a slouch hat, like a brigand about to set forth on a great adventure, and though he was bound no further than Fleet Street, it was adventure enough, leading to great flights of fancy and derring do. After him came Mrs. Chesterton, a little figure almost hidden by her husband's greatness. When Chesterton got into the cab, the old horse used to stagger in its shafts, and the old cab used to rock like a boat in a rough sea.

At luncheon time I often used to see G. K. C. in an Italian restaurant in Fleet Street where, with a bottle of port wine at his elbow, and a scribbling pad at his side, he used to write one of his articles for *The Daily News,* chuckling mightily over some happy paradox, which had just taken shape in his brain, and totally unconscious of any public observation of his private mirth.

As literary editor of *The Tribune,* I tried to buy Chesterton away from *The Daily News,* at double the price they paid him, but he was proof against this temptation. "*The Daily News* has been very good to me," he said, "and though I loathe their point of view on many subjects, I'm not going to desert them now." He agreed, however, to contribute to *The Tribune* from time to time, and as I had arranged the matter, he had a kindly feeling toward me which led to an embarrassing but splendid moment in my life. At a preliminary banquet given by the proprietor of that unfortunate paper to a crowd of distinguished people who utterly neglected to buy it, G. K. Chesterton sat, as one of the chief guests, at the high table. I had been obscurely placed at the back of the room, and this distressed the noble and generous soul of my good friend. When he was asked to speak, he made some general and excellent observations, and then uttered such a panegyric of me that I was dissolved in blushes, especially when he raised his glass and asked the company to drink to me. Some of them, including the

proprietor, were not altogether pleased with this demonstration in my favor, but, needless to say, I cherish it.

Among my happy recollections of G. K. C. is one day at luncheon hour when he was "guyed" by a group of factory girls in Fleet Street, and took their playfulness with jovial humor, careless of his dignity; and an evening at the Guildhall when King Albert of Belgium was the guest, and I encountered Chesterton afterward wandering in the courtyard like the restless ghost of a roistering cavalier, afraid to demand his hat from the flunkeys, because he had not the necessary shilling with which to tip them.

Chesterton is one of the great figures of literary England, and will live in the history of our own time as one of the wittiest and wisest men, worthy of a place in the portrait gallery of the immortals. His great figure, his overflowing humor, his splendid simplicity of faith in the ancient code of liberty and truth, put him head and shoulders above the standardized type of little "intellectuals" with whom the world is crowded.

I have the pleasantest recollections of "Intellectual Mansions," Battersea Park, but, after living there for four years or so, I moved over the bridge to the little house I have already mentioned, in Holland Street, Kensington, a few yards away from the old world Paradise, Kensington Gardens. It was a little house in a little street, which I still think the most charming in London, with fine old Georgian mansions mixed up with little old shops, so that an admiral lived next to a chimney sweep, and that great artist, Walter Crane, was two doors or so removed from an oil and colorman, who sold everything from treacle to paraffin. We had everything in Holland Street that adds to the charm of life—a public house at the corner, a German band which played all the wrong notes once a week, just as it ought to do, and a Punch and Judy show.

A near neighbor and close friend of mine at that time was E. W. Hornung, the author of *Raffles* and many better books not so famous. He was the brother-in-law of Conan Doyle, whose enormous success with Sherlock Holmes probably set his mind working on the character of that gentlemanly thief, Raffles, with whom, personally, I had no sympathy at all.

Hornung and I used to "jaw" about books and writing, and, as an obscure journalist and unsuccessful author, I used to stand in awe of his fine house, his powerful motor car, his son at Eton. He was a heavily built man, with a lazy manner and a certain intolerance of view which made him despise Socialists, radicals, or any critics of the British Empire and the old traditions, but I came to know the underlying sweetness and sentiment of his character, and his passion of patriotism. He used to drive me sometimes to places like Richmond Park and Windsor Forest, and there we used to walk about under the trees, discussing the eternal subject of books. Deep peace was about us in those old woods. Neither he nor I imagined in our wildest flights of fancy that one day he would be living in a hole in the ground under the ruins of Arras, and that life and death would knock all thought of books out of our minds.

His boy was his greatest pride, a fine lad, fresh from Eton, and steeped in the old traditions which Hornung thought gave the only grace to the code of an English gentleman. (He had no patience with any other school of thought.) The boy stood one day on the curbstone in High Street Kensington, on a day after war had been declared and the streets were placarded with posters, "Your King and Country Need You." He raised his hat to my wife, and said, "Do you think I ought to join up?" He joined up, like all boys of his age, and, like most of them in the list of second lieutenants, at that time, was killed very soon. His letters from the front were full of

faith and pride. He loved his men, the splendor of being an officer, the thought of the great adventure ahead for England's sake. He did not live into the times of disillusion and the dull routine of mud and misery. . . .

His father was broken-hearted. His only idea now was how to get out to the front, in spite of being too old for soldiering, and too heavy, and too asthmatical. It was my idea that he should join the Y.M.C.A., and he seized it gladly as a chance of service and heart healing. I met him in his hut at Arras, serving out tea to muddy Tommies, finding a man, now and then, to his enormous joy, who knew his son. Always he was in the spiritual presence of that boy of his. For the sake of that, and for the men's sake, he endured real agonies of physical discomfort in a drafty hut, with a stove which would not burn, and cocoa as his only drink. The fastidious author of *Raffles,* who had been particular about his creature comforts, and careful of the slightest draft!

He started a lending library for soldiers in the trenches, and I lent him a hand with it now and then. It was in a hut on the ruins of the Town Hall of Arras and because of the daily bombardment, he slept at night in a dugout below an avalanche of stones. I promised to give a lecture to his men on the history of Arras, and "mugged it up" from old books in an old château. The date was announced, and posted up on a placard. It was the 21st of March, 1918! No British soldier needs reminding of the meaning of that date. It was when 114 German divisions attacked the British line and all hell was let loose, and, for a time, the bottom seemed to fall out of the world.

I did not deliver that lecture. I was away at the south of the line, recording frightful happenings. But I heard afterward, from Hornung, that through the smoke and dust of heavy shelling which churned up old rubbish heaps of ruins in Arras, two Scottish soldiers in tin hats loomed up to hear the lecture. . . . Poor Hornung survived the

war, but not long. His soul was eager for that meeting with his son.

One visitor of mine in the little house in Holland Street, which was often overcrowded with a mixed company of writers, artists, and odd folk, was a distinguished little man who came only when there was no one else about. At least, he preferred it that way, using my house as a little retreat from the madding world. This was Monsignor Hugh Benson, the famous preacher and novelist. The son of an Archbishop of Canterbury, he had shocked his family by joining the Catholic Church, in which he found perpetual adventure and delight. He loved its ritual, its color, its legends, its romance, its history, its music, and its faith, like a small child in a big old house constantly discovering new wonders, mysteries, and enchanting treasures. He had the heart of a boy, and an enthusiasm for life and work which would not let him take any rest. As a preacher, he was constantly flying about the country for special sermons and missions, and he preached, or, as he used to say, "praught," with a passion that almost choked him and tore him to pieces. In spite of a painful little stutter, and intense shyness, he was extraordinarily eloquent, and every sermon was crammed with hard thinking, for he did not rely on sentiment for his effect, but on sheer intellectual reasoning.

That was only one part of his day's work. He had an enormous correspondence with people of all denominations or none, who used to write to him for advice and help, and every letter he received he answered as though his own life depended on it.

At my house he used to go to his bedroom at ten o'clock to deal with the day's budget. But when that was done with, he used to get out a manuscript book and begin to enjoy himself. That was when he was writing one of his novels—and as soon as one was finished, he began another.

"My dearest dream of Heaven," he told me once, "is to be writing a novel which goes well and is never finished. What more perfect bliss than that?"

Among his other passions—and all he liked he loved—was music, and he used to strike wonderful chords on my piano, and one particular combination of notes which he called the "deep sea chord," because, if you shut your eyes and listened, you could hear deep waters rushing overhead!

He killed himself by overwork, and I heard of his death when I was crossing a field outside Dixmude, which was a blazing ruin, in the autumn of the first year of war.

He used to envy my place in Fleet Street, and say that if he were not a priest, he would like to be a journalist.

XIII

IT is most astonishing as a reminder of the rapid progress of mechanical science during the past twenty-one years that a journalist like myself, still young, and almost a babe compared with veterans of Fleet Street still on active service, should have seen the first achievements in aviation, the first motor cars plying for hire in the streets, and the first moving pictures—three inventions that have changed our human destiny and mentality in an incalculable way, and the last not least.

It was, I think, in 1900 that I encountered the first motor "taxi" in Paris, one of those rattle-bone machines which, as far as Paris is concerned, have not improved enormously since that time. But it seemed nothing short of a miracle then, and it was not until several years later than they ousted the dear old hansom of London, which now survives only as a historical relic.

It is difficult to think back to the time when the klip-klop of horses' hoofs was the most characteristic noise of London by night, when one sat in quiet rooms above the street. It had a sound of its own, and a touch of romance which is missed by the older generation, accustomed now to the honking of motor horns. The younger generation cannot imagine life without that trumpeting.

I remember being sent by my paper to describe a night journey in a motor car as a new and exciting adventure, as it certainly was to me at that time when I traveled down to the Lands End, and saw, for the first time, the white glare of headlights on passing milestones and bewildered cattle, and passed through little sleeping villages where the noise of our coming was heard as a por-

tent, by people who jumped out of bed and stared through the window blinds. In those days a man who owned a car was regarded as a very rich and adventurous fellow, as well as something of a freak, and he was ridiculed with immense enjoyment by pedestrians when he was discovered, frequently, lying in the mud beneath his machine which had hopelessly broken down. Indeed, many people had a passionate hostility to motorists and motoring, and a great friend of mine so hated the sight of an automobile that he used to throw stones after them. He was a rich man, with carriages and horses, which he vowed he would never abandon for "a filthy, stinking motor car." Now he never moves a yard without one. I am the only consistent enemy of motor cars left in the world. I hate them like poison.

For professional purposes, however, I have been a great motorist, and I suppose that during the four and a half years of war I must have covered sixty thousand miles. I have hired motors in England, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Austria, Poland, Russia, Turkey, Asia Minor, and the United States. I have had every sort of accident that may happen to a motorist this side of death. Wheels have come off and gone rolling ahead of me down steep hills. Axles have broken beneath me. I have been dashed into level crossing gates, I have escaped an express train by something like three inches, and I have had my car smashed to bits by a collison with a lorry which laid my right arm out of action for three months.

Yet I was not such a "hoodoo" as a motorist as a delightful friend of mine named Coldstream. Whenever he sat in a motor car he used to expect something to happen to it, and it always did. The door handle would drop off, just as a preliminary warning. Then one of the cylinders would miss fire, as another sign of impending disaster. Then the back axle would break, or some-

thing would happen to prevent any further journey. Once, going with him from Arras to Amiens, we put two motor cars out of action, and then borrowed an ambulance, about ten miles from Amiens. After the first four miles it broke down hopelessly, and, finally, we had to walk the rest of the way.

Moving pictures have caused something like a revolution in social life, and on balance I believe they have been and are an immense boon to mankind—and womankind, especially in small country towns and villages which, until that invention, had no form of entertainment beyond an occasional magic-lantern show, or "penny reading." They bring romance and adventure to the farm laborer, the errand boy, the village girl, and the doctor's daughter, and despite a lot of foolish stuff shown on the screen, give a larger outlook on life, and some sense of the beauty and grace of life, to the great masses. They give them also a comparison of the present with the past, and of one country with another. Perhaps in showing the contrast between one class and another, in extremes of luxury and penury, they are creating a spirit of social discontent which may have serious consequence—but that remains to be seen.

I was an actor, for journalistic purposes, in one of the first film dramas ever produced in England. The first scene was an elopement by motor car, and the little company of actors and actresses assembled in the front garden of a large empty mansion in a suburb in the southeast of London, namely Herne Hill. The heroine and the gentleman who played the part of her irate father entered the house, and disappeared.

Meanwhile a number of business men of Herne Hill, on their way to work in the city, as well as various tradesmen and errands boys, were astonished by the sight of two motor cars, half concealed behind the bushes in the drive, and by the group of peculiar-looking people, ap-

parently engaged in some criminal enterprise. They were still more astonished and alarmed at the following events:

(1) A good-looking youth advanced toward the house from a hiding place in the bushes, and threw pebbles at a window of the house.

(2) The window opened, and a beautiful girl appeared and wafted kisses to the boy below. Then disappeared.

(3) The front door opened, and the beautiful girl rushed into the arms of the boy. After ardent embraces, he came with her to one of the motor cars, placed her inside, and drove off at a furious pace.

(4) Another window in the house opened, and an elderly gentleman looked out, waving his arms in obvious indignation, bordering on apoplexy.

(5) Shortly afterward, he rushed out of the front door after the departing motor car (which had made several false starts), with clenched fists, and the words, "My God! My God! . . . My daughter! My daughter!"

By this time the Herne Hill inhabitants gathered at the gate were excited and distressed. One gentleman shouted loudly for the police. Another chivalrously remarked that he was no spoil-sport, and if the girl wanted to elope, it was none of their business. A fox terrier belonging to the butcher boy, ran, barking furiously, at the despairing father, who was still panting down the drive. Then the usual policeman strolled up and said, "What's all this 'ere?" Explanation and laughter followed. Nothing like it had ever been seen before in respectable Herne Hill, but they had heard of the cinema and its amazing drama. So this was how it was done! Well, well!

Astonishing things happened in that early film drama, as old as the hills now, but novel and sensational then. The irate father giving chase in another powerful motor,

(which moved at about ten miles an hour) was arrested by bogus policemen with red noses, thrown off the scent by comic tramps, and finally blown up in an explosion of the car, creating terror in a Surrey village, which thought that anarchists were loose. After many further incidents the runaway couple were married in a little old church—I walked in front of the camera as one of the guests—while two of the actors were posted as spies to give warning of any approach of the country clergyman. He, dear man, appeared in the opposite direction, and was horrified to find a wedding going on without his knowledge, and an unknown parson (who had dressed behind a hedge) officiating in the most unctuous way. For me it was a day of unceasing laughter, for there was something enormously ludicrous about the surprise of the passers-by, who could not guess at what was the real meaning of the mock drama. Now it is a commonplace, and no one is surprised when a company of film actors takes possession of the road.

Looking back upon the almost miraculous progress of aviation, it seems to me, and to many others, that humanity rose very high and fell very low when it discovered at last the secret of flight. For thousands of years, perhaps from the days when primitive man stood in a lonely world and watched the easy grace, the swift and joyous liberty of the birds above his head, there has been in the soul of man the dream of that power to fly. Men lost their lives in vain attempts, as far back as the myth of Icarus, whose waxed wings melted in the sun. Scientists studied the mechanism of birds, tethered their imagination to rising kites, sought vainly for the power to lift a heavy body from the earth. At last it was found in the petrol-driven engine, and men were seen to rise higher than the clouds, and to travel through the great spaces of the sky like gods. A pity that this achievement came just in time for world war, and that the power and

beauty of flight was used for dropping death upon crowded cities and the armies of youth, crouching in ditches beneath those destroying dragons!

I had no clear vision of that, in spite of the wonderful prophecy of H. G. Wells, when I watched the first feeble attempts of the early aviators in England and France. Those first aviation meetings did not promise mastery of the air except by the eye of faith. For hours, and sometimes for days, we waited on the edge of flat fields while men like Graham White, Latham, Blériot, Hamel, and other pioneers whose names, alas! I have forgotten—there is something terrible and tragic in that quick forgetfulness of heroic adventure—tinkered with their machines, stared at the wind gauge, would not risk the light breeze that blew, or rose a little, after running like lame ducks around the field, and crashed again like wounded birds. Death took a heavy toll of them. There was hardly one of those early meetings in which I did not see one or more fatal accidents.

I was close to the Hon. Charles Rolls, a very gallant and splendid fellow, when he fell. That was at the meeting in Bournemouth which I have mentioned before, when the Mayor challenged noonday itself in an artificial nose, and everybody seemed bewitched by some spell of midsummer madness. There was a flower carnival in progress and pretty girls all in white and sprigged muslin, mounted on floral cars, flung confetti and bouquets at the crowd, who pelted them back. From the flying field, while this was going on, Charles Rolls rose in his machine to perform an evolution which had been set as a competition. It was a death trap at that period of flying, for he had to fly four sides of a small square, and then alight in the center of it. No breeze was stirring, or very little, and the sky was cloudless. But rising sharply to form one side of the square, Rolls's machine side slipped and fell like a stone. His body lay there for a moment

before the spectators were conscious of tragedy. Then they rushed toward him. . . . A few yards away, the floral cars continued their procession, and the pretty girls pelted the laughing crowds with blossoms.

That was later than the beginning of flight. The first time I realized the almost limitless possibilities of heavier-than-air machines was at Doncaster, when Colonel Cody was among the competitors. The Doncaster meeting had been a great failure from the public point of view. There was very little flying, owing to bad weather and elementary aëroplanes. The aviators sulked in their tents, and the gloomy atmosphere was deepened by some financial troubles of the organizers, so that the gate money was seized to liquidate their debts. At least, that was the rumor, as I remember it. But there was one cheerful man, every ready with a friendly word and jest. That was Colonel Cody who, after many kite-flying experiments, on behalf of the British government, which had failed to give him any financial aid, was putting the finishing touches to a homemade biplane, with the help of his son. It was a monstrous and clumsy affair. It had great struts of bamboo, an enormous spread of wing space, and a petrol tank weighing half a ton. This structure, which was tied up with string, and old wire, and bits of iron, was nicknamed St. Paul's Cathedral, and Noah's Ark, and all kinds of ridiculous names, by correspondents who did not believe in its powers of flight. But they loved to talk to old Cody, dressed like "Buffalo Bill" (though he was no relation of the original Colonel Cody of showman fame), with long hair which he used to wind up under his hat and fasten with an enormous bodkin with which he also used to pick his teeth. I laughed loud and long at the first sight of his immense aëroplane, and refused to credit his childlike assertion that it would fly like a bird. But one morning early, he enlisted volunteers to haul it out of its hangar and set its engine going

with the noise of seven devils. "Poor old Cody!" said a friend of mine. "One might as well try to fly with a railway engine!"

Hardly were the words out of his mouth, than the great thing rose, and not like a bird, but gracefully and gently as a butterfly, was wafted above our heads, and flew steadily across the field. We chased it, shouting and cheering. It seemed to us like a miracle. It was a miracle—man's conquest of flight.

Presently, after three minutes, I think, "something happened." The great aëroplane staggered back, flagged, and took a nose-dive to earth, where it lay with its engine dug deep into the soil and a confusion of twisted wires and broken canvas about it. With two or three other men—among them a brilliant and well-remembered journalist, Harold Ashton—I ran forward, breathlessly, and helped to drag Cody from beneath the wreckage, dazed and bloody, but not badly hurt. His first words were triumphant: "What did I tell you, boys? It flew like a bird!"

It was patched up again, and flew again, until Cody was killed. He was truly one of the heroic pioneers, obstinate in faith, heavily in debt, unhelped by any soul, except that son of his who believed in "the old dad." It was he who cured me of scepticism. After seeing his heavy machine fly around the course, I knew that the game had been won, and that one day, not one man, but many, might be carried in an aëroplane on great strong wings.

Edgar Wallace, war correspondent, novelist, poet, and great-hearted fellow, was at Doncaster with Harold Ashton and others, and I remember we played poker, which was new to me, after the day's work. The landlord of the inn in which we stayed watched the game for a few minutes, and saw Wallace scoop the pool with a royal flush. The old man's eyes fairly bulged in his head. "It's

a great game, that!" he remarked, and insisted on taking a hand. Wallace had phenomenal luck with his hands and so raked the landlord's money out of his pockets that he fled in dismay. "It's a devil's game!" was his final verdict. However, that has nothing to do with the triumph of flight, except on the part of the landlord.

Another revelation of progress rapidly achieved happened at Blackpool, which coincided with the Doncaster meeting. I went on from one to the other and found the weather at Blackpool frightful, from the point of view of flying. Rain poured down heavily, and the wind was violent—so savage, indeed, across the flat fields of the flying ground that it uprooted the poles of the press tent and made the canvas flap like clothes hung out to dry on a gusty day. Before this pavilion finally collapsed in the gale, I used it as a writing place, and remember sitting there with Bart Kennedy, with our collars tucked up, trying to keep our paper dry and our tempers cool. Bart Kennedy who, as a young man, had tramped about the world, not as a literary adventurer but as a real vagabond of the old style, earning his bread by casual labor, discovered in later life the gift of words, which he used in a crude, forceful, ungrammatical, but somewhat biblical, style to describe his experiences of life in the wild places of the world, and the philosophy which he had extracted therefrom. He posed as a rebel and a man of primitive soul in the artificial environment of civilization, and was adopted by the Harmsworth Press as an amusing freak. Although he was conscious of his own pose, and played it for all it was worth, it was based on sincerity. He was truly a rebel and a natural man, with the honesty, brutality, simplicity, and courage of the backwoodsman. In that tent at Blackpool, I remember his talking to a carpenter who was trying to fix the tent poles.

"Say, old friend, have you ever heard of Jack Cade?"

The carpenter scratched his head, thoughtfully.

"Can't say I remember any lad of that name. He isn't one of my pals."

"He was a carpenter like you," said Bart Kennedy. "Lived five hundred years ago, and tried to gain liberty for the workingmen of England. An honest rebel, was Jack Cade. Why don't you fellows learn the spirit of revolt? You're all as tame as sheep, without the pluck of a louse."

The collapse of the tent interrupted this dialogue, in which "Bart," as we called him, endeavored to raise rebellion against the British Constitution.

There was "half a gale," as seamen would have called it, with the wind at sixty miles an hour, and to the amazement of the spectators, who had given up all hopes of watching a flight that day, an aviator mounted into the fury of the storm. It was Latham, the most dare-devil of the early adventurers of flight, the most passionate and ill-tempered of them. I think it was a kind of rage which made him go up that afternoon. He was "fed up" with waiting for moderate weather, and with the little ladies who surrounded him with adulation and rivalry, as many of those aviators were surrounded by girls who were their hero worshipers and their harpies. It was the most astounding flight that had been seen up to that time. Latham's machine was like a frail craft in a rough sea. The wind furies shrieked, and tried to tear this thing to pieces. It staggered and strained, and seemed to be tossed like a bit of paper in that wild wind. At times the power of the engine seemed to be exactly equaled by the force of the wind, and it remained aloft, making no progress but shuddering, as it were, until Latham wrenched it round and evaded the direct blast. He flew at a terrific speed, with the wind behind him, rising and dipping with tilted wings, like a sea gull in a storm. The correspondents on the press stand went a little mad at the sight and rose and cheered hoarsely, with a sense of

fear, because this man seemed to be courting death. We expected him to crash at any moment. One voice rose above all the others, and roared out words which I have never forgotten. "You splendid fool! Come down! Come down!"

It was Barzini, the Italian correspondent, the most brilliant descriptive writer in the world. Like an Italian of the Medici family, with long nose and olive skin and dark liquid eyes, Latham's heroic exploit stirred him to a passion of emotion, and tears poured down his face. His description of that flight was one of the finest things I have ever read.

One of the most exciting episodes of those early days of record making was when Graham White competed with Paulhan in a race from London to Manchester. With Ernest Perris, the news editor of *The Daily Chronicle,* and Rowan, one of the correspondents, I set out in a powerful motor car to follow the flight, which began shortly before dark. Graham White's plan was to fly by night—the first time such an exploit had been attempted—and he thought that our headlights might help as some guide outside London. We lost him almost at once, and after a wild motor ride at a breakneck pace in the darkness, decided that we should never see him again. He had probably hit a tree, and was lying dead in some field. Many other correspondents had motored out, but we lost them all, and halted at the side of a lonely road where we heard voices shouting to each other in French.

"Perhaps they are Graham White's mechanics," I said to Perris.

This guess proved to be right, and upon inquiry from the men, we found that Graham White had had engine trouble, and had alighted in some garden not far from where we stood.

It was a little country village, though I cannot recol-

lect its name or whereabouts, and after tramping across fields, we saw a house with lights shining from all its windows. It was the village rectory, remote from the world and all the excitements of life, until, out of the darkness, a great bird had dropped into the garden, with the noise of a dragon. From the wings of the bird a young man, dirty, half-dazed, freezing cold, and drunk with fatigue, staggered out, banged at the door, and asked for food and a place to sleep. The clergyman's wife and the clergyman's daughter rose to the occasion, as Englishwomen do in times of crisis. They dressed themselves, made some coffee, cooked some boiled eggs, lighted big fires, and unfroze the bird man. He was already abed, after a plea to be called at the first gleam of dawn, when we arrived. Presently other motorists arrived, all cold and hungry and muddy. The country rectory was invaded by these wild-looking people and the clergyman's pretty daughter, with shining eyes, served us all with coffee and eggs, and seemed to enjoy the excitement as the greatest thing that had happened in her life. I have no recollection of the clergyman. I dare say the poor man was bewildered by the sudden tumult in his house of peace, and left everything to his capable wife and the swift grace of his little daughter.

Before the dawn Graham White was down from his bed, thoroughly bad-tempered and abominably rude, for which there was ample excuse, as word was brought that Paulhan was well ahead, although he, too, had dropped into a field. Perris and I urged him not to fly again before daybreak, but he told us to go to the devil, and insisted on getting away in the darkness. We took to the car again, waited until we heard the roar of Graham White's engines, and saw him pass overhead like a great black bat. Then we chased him again, and lost him again. He came to earth with more engine trouble in a ploughed field not long after dawn. A little crowd of people

gathered round him, and I saw some of the correspondents who had started from London at the same time as ourselves—now disheveled, pale, and dirty in the bleak dawn. One young man, belonging to the old *Morning Leader,* I think, carried a red silk cushion. His car lay overturned in a ditch, but he still clung to the cushion, he told me, as his one hold on the actuality of life, which seemed nothing but a mad dream.

Another historic event was the All-round-England race, which became a duel between two famous Frenchmen, Vedrennes and Beaumont. The first named was a rough, brutal, foul-mouthed mechanic, with immense courage and skill. The second was a naval officer of most charming and gallant personality. Beaumont came back to Brooklands after his successful and wonderful flight, only a few minutes ahead of Vedrennes. A great crowd of men and women, in which there were a number of pretty ladies who had motored out early from London, had assembled at Brooklands to cheer the winner, but, as always among English crowds, their sympathy was excited by the man who had just missed the first prize. When Vedrennes appeared in sight, there was a rush to meet him. He stepped out of his machine, and looked fiercely around. When some one told him that Beaumont had arrived first, he raised both his clenched fists and cried out a foul and frightful oath—fortunately in French. Then he burst into tears, and, looking round in a dazed way, asked if there was any woman who would kiss him. A little Frenchwoman in the crowd stepped shyly out, and Vedrennes flung his greasy arms about her and kissed her emotionally. It was characteristic of the French soul that in the moment of his tragic disappointment he should have sought a woman's arms, like a boy who goes to his mother in distress. I have never forgotten that little episode, and I have seen similar things in time of war.

It was Alfred Harmsworth and *The Daily Mail* which put up all the prizes for these record-making flights, and the man who was afterward Lord Northcliffe deserved all the honor he gained for his generous and farseeing encouragement of aviation. It was he who offered a big prize for a cross-Channel flight, which then sounded almost beyond the bounds of possibility. Latham was the first favorite for that prize, and was determined to gain it. His first attempt was a failure, and he fell into the sea, and was picked up smoking a cigarette as he clung to the wreckage of his planes. After that, he established himself at the other side of the Channel, at a little place called Sangatte, near Calais, and waited for some improvements to his engine, and favorable weather.

Another competitor and pioneer, named Blériot, was tinkering about with a monoplane on the same strip of coast, but nobody seemed to think much of his chances.

The Daily Mail had an immense staff of correspondents on both sides of the Channel, and a wireless installation by which they could signal to each other. Without any assistance of that kind, I had to keep my eye on both sides of the Channel, which I crossed almost every day for about a fortnight. Latham was vague about the possibilities of his start. He might go any morning at dawn. But morning after morning passed, and the French destroyers which had been lent by the French government to patrol the Channel, in case he fell in again, prepared to steam away. Several correspondents—English and French—used to spend the night on a Calais tugboat lying off Sangatte, and I joined them there the night before Latham assured us all that he would go next day. Something happened at that time to Latham—I think his nerve gave way temporarily, owing to the strain of waiting and continued engine trouble. He went about looking depressed and wretched, and he was as white as a sheet after an interview with the commander of a French

destroyer, who informed him that he could wait no longer.

I crossed over to Dover, deciding that the English side might be the best place to wait, after all, especially as nobody seemed likely to cross. That very morning Blériot came over in his aëroplane like a bird, and there was not a soul to see him come. *The Daily Mail* staff were in bed and asleep, and I and other men of other papers were, by a lucky fluke, first on the scene to greet the man who had done the worst thing that has ever been done to England—though we did not guess it at the time. For, by flying across the Channel, he robbed us for all time of our island security and made that "silver streak," which has been our safeguard from foreign foes, no more than a puddle which might be crossed in a few minutes along the highway of the air. After Blériot came the bombing Gothas of the German army, and now, without air defense, we lie open to any enemy as an easy target for his bombs and poison gas.

It was in the war that I completed my studies of aviation and its conquest. On mornings of great slaughter, scores of times, hundreds of times, I saw our boys fly out as heralds of a battle. Day after day, year after year, I saw that war in the air which became more intense, which crowded the sky with single combats and great tourneys, as the numbers of squadrons were increased by the Germans and ourselves. I saw the enemy's planes and our own shot down, so that the battlefields were littered with their wreckage.

In fair weather and foul they went out on reconnaissance, signaled to the guns, fought each other to the death. The mere mechanical side of flight had no more secrets, it seemed. The little "stunts" of the pioneer days, the records of speed and height, were made ridiculous by the audacities and exploits of aviation in war. Our young men were masters of the machine, and flight seemed as

natural and easy to them as to the birds who were scared at their swift rush of wings. They flew through storms of shrapnel, skimmed low above enemy trenches, dropped flaming death into cities and camps. The enemy was not behindhand in courage and skill, not less lucky in human target practice, rather more ruthless in bomb dropping over civilian populations whose women and babes were killed in their beds. After tax collecting by bombing aëroplanes in Mesopotamia, we cannot be self-righteous now. The beauty and the power of flight came very quickly to mankind after Cody went up in that old homemade 'bus, and crashed after a few moments of ecstasy. And mankind has used it as a devil's gift.

XIV

DURING one of those periods when I deliberately broke the chains of regular journalism in order to enjoy the dangerous liberty of a free lance, I made a bid for fortune by writing some one-act plays, and one three-act play.

I had gained some knowledge of stage technique and of that high mystery known as "construction," as a dramatic critic, when, for six months, I acted for William Archer, the master critic, during his absence in the United States. This knowledge, I may say at once, was not of the slightest use to me, because technique cannot take the place of inspiration—Barrie and others have exploded its traditions—and I suffered the usual disappointments of the novice in that most difficult art.

To some extent I had the wires greased for me by my brother, Cosmo Hamilton, and it was his influence, and his expert touches to my little drama "Menders of Nets," which caused it to be produced at the Royalty Theater, with a distinguished cast, including the beautiful Beryl Faber and that great actor Arthur Holmes-Gore. It was well received, and I had visions of motor cars and other fruits of success, which suddenly withered when the announcement was made that the play was to be withdrawn after a few performances. What had happened was an ultimatum presented to Otho Stuart, the manager of the Royalty Theater, by Albert Chevalier who, in the same bill, was playing another one-act drama, called "The House." My "Menders of Nets" played for something over an hour, and ended in a tragic scene in a fisherman's cottage. When the curtain rang up again for Albert

Chevalier, the second play began with gloom and tragedy in the same key as mine, and the audience had had enough of this kind of atmosphere. "Either 'Menders of Nets' must be changed," said Chevalier, "or I withdraw 'The House.'" That, anyhow, was the explanation given to me, and off came my piece.

This blow was followed by another, more amazing. Three other one-act plays of mine were accepted by a gentleman reputed to be enormously rich, who took one of the London theaters for a "triple bill" season. Unfortunately, before the production of my little plays, he was overwhelmed in debt, abandoned his theatrical schemes, and departed for the Continent with the only copies of my three efforts, which I have not seen or heard of from that day to this.

Drama seemed to me too hazardous an adventure for a man who has to pay the current expenses of life, and I turned to other forms of writing to keep the little old pot boiling on the domestic hearth. I became for a time a literary "ghost."

It is ironical and amusing that three books of mine which achieved considerable financial success and obtained great and favorable publicity were published under another man's name. He wanted *kudos,* and I wanted a certain amount of ready cash, in order to pay the rent and other necessities of life. I agreed readily to write a book for him—and afterward two more—for a certain fixed sum. As it happened, I think he not only obtained the *kudos,* but a fair profit as well. As I had been well paid, I was perfectly content.

Some friends of mine, to whom I have mentioned this secret, without giving away the name of the man who assumed the title of author, charge me with having been guilty of an immoral and scandalous transaction. My conscience does not prick me very sharply. As far as I was concerned, I was guilty of no deceit, and no dishonesty.

I provided a certain amount of work, for which I was adequately paid, on condition that my name was not attached to it. Journalists do the same thing day by day, and the editor of the journal gets the credit. It is the other man who must have felt uneasy and conscience-stricken, sometimes, because he was a masquerader. But his sense of humor, his charm of personality, and his generosity, made me take a lenient view of his literary camouflage.

I wrote another book, for another man, but in that case he was far more entitled to the credit, because it was actually his narrative, and the record of his own amazing adventures told to me, partly in French and partly in broken English. This was a story of the sea, called *Fifteen Thousand Miles in a Ketch,* by Captain Raymond Rallier du Baty, published in England by Nelson's.

This young Frenchman is one of the most charming and courageous souls I have ever met, and I look back with pleasure to the days when we used to motor out to Windsor Forest and there, under the old oaks, he used to spread out his charts and describe his amazing voyage in a little fishing ketch, with his brother and a crew of six, from Boulogne-sur-mer to Sidney, in Australia, stopping six months on the way at the desert island of Kerguelen in the South Pacific, where they lived like primitive men of the Paleolithic age, fighting sea lions with clubs, to obtain their blubbers, and having strange and desperate adventures in their exploration of this mountainous island. The narrative I wrote from his spoken story was widely and enthusiastically reviewed, and I remember *The Spectator* went so far as to say that "it was worthy to have a place on the bookshelf by the side of Robinson Crusoe."

Raymond du Baty, that handsome, brown-eyed, quiet, and noble young seaman of France, felt the call of the wild again after my acquaintance with him, and returned

to the desert island for further exploration. After six months of solitude cut off from all the world and its news, a steamer came to the island and brought with it tidings of a world gone mad. It was Armageddon. Germany and Austria, Turkey and Bulgaria were at war with France, Great Britain, and Russia. Other nations were getting dragged in. The fields of Europe were drenched in the blood of the world's youth. France was sorely stricken, but holding out with heroic endurance. . . .

Imagine the effect of that news on a young Frenchman who had heard no whisper of it, until its horror burst with full force upon him in his island of eternal peace! He abandoned Kerguelen and went back to France. Within a fortnight he had gained his pilot's certificate as an aviator, and was flying over the German lines with shrapnel bursting about his wings.

That, however, is later history, and takes me away from that second period of free lancing in London when I did many different kinds of work, and, on the whole, enjoyed the game.

One little enterprise at this time which interested me a good deal and enabled me to earn a considerable sum of money with hardly any labor—a rare achievement!—was an idea which I proposed to *The Daily Graphic*—for their correspondence column. My suggestion was to obtain from well-known people their views and ideals on the subject of "The Simple Life." A further part of my amiable suggestion was that I should be paid a certain fee for every column of the kind which I obtained for the paper. The proposal was accepted, and my wife and I made a careful selection of names, including princes, and princesses, dukes and duchesses, famous actors and actresses, society beauties, and, indeed, celebrities of all kinds. I then drafted a letter in which I suggested, in all sincerity, that our modern civilization had become too complex and too materialistic, and expressed the hope

that I might be favored with an opinion on the possibility and advantages of a return to "The Simple Life."

The response to these letters was amazing. Instinctively I had struck a little note which caused a lively vibration of emotion and sympathy in many minds. It was before the war or the shadow of war had fallen over Europe, and when great numbers of people were alarmed by the lack of idealism, the gross materialism, the frivolity, the decadence of our social state. There was also a revolt of the spirit against the artificiality of city life, a yearning for that "return to nature" which was so strong a sentiment in France before the Revolution, especially among the aristocratic and intellectual classes.

Something of the sort was acting like yeast in the imagination of similar classes in England and other countries. I received an immense number of answers to my inquiry, and many of them were extremely interesting and valuable as the revelation of that craving for simplicity in ideals and conduct of life, and for a closer touch with primitive nature and the beauty of eternal things. It was characteristic, I think, that people of high rank and easy circumstances were the warmest advocates of "The Simple Life." The correspondence continued for weeks and months, and my title became a catchword on the stage, in *Punch,* and in private society. One of the most beautiful letters I received—it contained more than three thousand words—was from "Carmen Sylva," describing a day in her life as Queen of Roumania. Afterward a selection of the letters was published in book form, and had a great success.

Another task I undertook more for love than lucre (I received only a nominal fee) was to help in the organization of the Shakespeare Memorial Committee. A considerable sum of money had been bequeathed by certain philanthropists for the purpose of honoring the memory of Shakespeare and encouraging the study of his

works, by some national memorial worthy of his genius, as the world's tribute to his immortal spirit. The honorary secretary and most ardent promoter of this scheme was Israel Gollancz—since knighted—a little professor at Oxford and London, with an immense range of scholarship in Anglo-Saxon and mediæval literature, and an insatiable capacity for organizing committees, societies, academies, and other groups devoted to the advancement of learning, and, anyhow, to agreeable social intercourse and intellectual rendezvous. Meeting the professor in a bun shop, I became enthusiastic with the idea of the Shakespeare Memorial, and willingly offered to help him get his first General Committee and organize a great public meeting at the Mansion House, to place the idea of the Memorial before the nation with an appeal for funds.

This work brought me into touch with many interesting people, apart from Sir Israel himself, for whom I have always had an affectionate regard, and among them I remember one of the grand old men of England—Doctor Furnivall, editor of the Leopold Shakespeare. He was over eighty years of age when I first met him, but he had the heart of a boy, the gayety of D'Artagnan, the Musketeer, and the debonnair look of an ancient cavalier. Every Sunday he used, even at that age, to take out an eight of shopgirls on old Father Thames, and once every week he held a reception at the top of a tea shop in Oxford Street, when scholars old and young, journalists, and pretty ladies used to crowd round him, enamored by his silvery grace, his exquisite courtesy, the wit that played about his words like the mellow sunshine of an autumn day. He was always very kind to me, and I loved the sight of him.

I came to know another grand old man—of another type—in connection with that work for the Shakespeare Committee. The first time I met Lord Roberts, that little

white falcon of England, whom often I had seen riding in royal processions through the streets of London, with a roar of cheers following him, was in his house in Portland Place when I "touched" him for a donation to the Shakespeare Fund and persuaded him to join the General Committee. He was going to a reception that evening, and I remember him now, as he stood before me, a little old soldier, in full uniform, with rows and rows of medals and stars, all a-glitter, but not brighter than his keen eyes beneath their shaggy brows. After listening to my explanation, he spoke of his love of Shakespeare as a man might speak of his best comrade, and declared his willingness to do any service for his sake.

The next time I saw Lord Roberts was at one of those early aviation meetings which I have described. I stood by his side, and he chatted to me about the marvel of this coming conquest of the air. As he spoke an aëroplane danced over the turf and rose and soared away, and the little old man, cheering like a schoolboy, ran after it a little way with the rest of the crowd, as young in spirit as any man there, sixty years his junior.

Toward the end of his life a shadow darkened his spirit, though it did not dim his eyes or the fire that still burnt in him, as when, half a century before, he blew up the gates of Delhi and brought relief to the beleaguered survivors. He saw very clearly the approach of the German menace to Europe and that war in which we should be involved, unprepared, without a national army, with untrained men. Again and again he tried to warn the nation of its impending peril, of the tremendous forces preparing the destruction of its youth, and he devoted the last years of his life in another attempt to induce Great Britain to adopt some form of compulsory military service, without avail.

I remember traveling down to his house at Ascot on the morning following one of those speeches in the House

of Lords. I went to ask him to write some reminiscences for a weekly paper. He would not listen to that, and when we sat together in a first-class carriage on the way to town (I had a third-class ticket!) he buried himself behind *The Times,* and was disinclined to talk. But I was inclined to talk, because it is not often that I should sit alone with "Our Bobs," and when I caught his eye over the top of *The Times,* I ventured a remark which I thought might please him.

"Powerful speech of yours, sir, last night!"

He put down *The Times,* and stared at me, moodily.

"Do you think so? Shall I tell you what the British people think of me?"

"What is that, sir?"

"They think I'm a damned old fool, scare mongering and raising silly bogies. That's what they think of my speech."

And it was true, and to some extent I agreed with them, as I must confess, not believing much in the German menace, and believing anyhow that by wise diplomacy, a little tact, friendly demonstrations to a friendly folk, we might disarm the power of the military caste and insure peace.

"All the same," said Lord Roberts, "I talk of what I know. Germany is preparing for war—and we have no army such as we shall need when it happens."

It was to my brother, Cosmo Hamilton, then editor of *The World* in London, that Lord Roberts detailed his scheme of military service. A series of articles, published anonymously in that paper, attracted considerable interest among the small crowd who believed in a big army of defense, but no one knew that every word of them was dictated by Lord Roberts to my brother, as his last message to the nation—before the storm broke.

It was fitting that the little old soldier whose life covered a great span of our imperial history in so many wars,

which now some of us look back to without much pride except in the ceaseless courage and the gay adventurous spirit of our officers and men, should die, if not on the field of battle, then at least at General Headquarters within sound of the guns. He had been a prophet of this war. Perhaps if we had believed him more, and if our statesmen and people had realized the frightful menace ahead, it might never have happened. But those "ifs" belong to the irrevocable tragedy of history.

I was a war correspondent in France when he died, but I came back to England to attend his funeral and write my tribute to this great and gallant old man who, in spite of a life of war, or because of it, had a great tenderness in his heart for humanity, a love of peace, and the chivalry which belonged, at least in ideal, to the old code of knighthood.

Going back to the subject of the Shakespeare Memorial Theater, it is amusing to me to remember an interview I had which, at the time, was rather painful. We were anxious to obtain the support of Alverstone, the Lord Chief Justice, on the General Committee, and I drove up in a hansom to his house in Kensington, to put the request before him.

I wore that day a "topper" and a tail coat, and looked so extremely respectable that I impressed the critical eyes of his lordship's footman. He explained that Lord Alverstone had been away on circuit but was due back very shortly that afternoon. Perhaps I might like to wait for him. I agreed, and was shown into the Lord Chief's study, where I waited for something like an hour.

During that time I became aware that if I were of a curious and dishonorable mind, I might learn many strange secrets in this room. Bundles of letters and documents were lying on the Lord Chief's desk. The drawers were unlocked, as I could see by papers revealed

in them. A "crook" in this room might get hold of the seals, the writing paper, the signature, and the private correspondence of the Lord Chief Justice of England, and play a great game with them. It seemed to me extraordinary that a footman should put an unknown visitor, on unknown business, into this private room, and leave him there for nearly an hour.

The Lord Chief thought so, too. Just as I was becoming uneasy at my position to the point of ringing the bell and going away, there was a bang at the front door, followed by heavy footsteps in the hall. Then I heard a deep and angry voice say, "Who is he?" A moment later the door of the study was flung open and the great and rather terrifying figure of Lord Alverstone strode in. He stared at me as though about to sentence me to death, and I blenched under his gaze.

"Who the devil are you?" he asked, with a growl of rage and suspicion. "What the devil do you mean by taking possession of my study?"

"Why did your footman show me in, and what do you mean by speaking to me like that?" I answered, suddenly angered by his extraordinary discourtesy.

It was not a good introduction to the subject of Shakespeare. Nor was it a respectful way of address to the Lord Chief Justice of England. But my reply seemed to reassure him as to my respectability. He breathed heavily for a moment, and then, in a mild voice, requested to know my business. When I told him I wished to enlist his aid on the Committee of the Shakespeare Memorial, a twinkle of humor came into his eyes, and he asked me to sit down and have a cigar while we chatted over the subject. He agreed to give his name and a subscription. Before I left, he made a half apology for his burst of anger at the sight of me.

"There are lots of papers about this room. . . . I have to be careful."

Then he put his heavy hand in a friendly way on my shoulder and said, "Glad you came."

I was jolly glad to go, but I thought in case of any accident that might happen to me later it would be useful to have the favor of the Lord Chief. I thought so when I saw him sitting below the sword of justice, in all his terrible power.

From the little flat in Overstrand Mansions my wife and I and a small boy aged four sent out thousands of invitations on behalf of the committee which included his name, to a general public meeting at the Mansion House. The small boy trundled those bundles of letters in his wheelbarrow to the pillar box and insisted upon being lifted up to thrust them into the red mouth of that receptacle. We stuffed it full, to the great annoyance, I imagine, of the postman.

The public meeting was a splendid success. Israel Gollancz was happy, Beerbohm Tree was brilliant. Anthony Hope made one of his charming speeches. Bernard Shaw was surprisingly kind to Shakespeare. There were columns about it in the newspapers. But though many years have passed, the Shakespeare Memorial is still in the air, the Committee is still quarreling with one another as to the best way of using their funds, and Sir Israel Gollancz is still honorary secretary, trying in his genial way to compromise between a hundred conflicting plans.

XV

IN September of 1912 war broke out in the Balkans and, though we knew it not at the time, it was the overture to another war in which the whole world would be involved.

This seemed to be no more than a gathering of semi-civilized peoples—Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro —joined together in military alliance and by an old heritage of hatred against the Turk in Europe. Behind that combination, however, there were Great Powers, watching this affair with jealous hostility, with brooding anxiety, and with racial, dynastic, and financial interests closely touched. Russia was behind Serbia, whose hatred of Austria was equaled only by its fear that Austria might attack it in the rear when it marched against the Turks. Germany was behind the Turks, afraid of a Russian intervention. Serbia's claim for "an open window," on the Adriatic would not be tolerated by the Austrian Empire. The Greek claim to Crete and the dream of getting back to Asia Minor would arouse the jealousy of France and Italy. There was in this Balkan business a devil's brew to poison the system of international relations, and behind the scenes corrupt interests of armament firms, Jewish money lenders, international financiers, were working in secret, sinister ways for great stakes.

Before war was actually declared, I set out for Serbia, on the way to Bulgaria, as "artist correspondent" of *The Graphic* and *Daily Graphic,* a title that amused me a good deal, as my artistic talent was of a most elementary kind. All I was required to do, however, was to provide the roughest sketches to be worked up by artists at home.

I was excited by this chance of becoming a war correspondent, which seemed to me the crown of journalistic ambition, and the heart of its adventure and romance. I little knew then that my squalid experience in this Balkan campaign would be but the first faint whiff of war with which, two years later, like most other men of my age, I was to become familiar in its daily routine, in the midst of its monstrous melodrama.

Provided with enough notebooks and sketchbooks to write and illustrate a history of the world, and enriched with a belt of gold which weighed heavy and chafed my waistline, I had an uneventful journey as far as the Danube below Belgrade. Then it brightened up a little. After my passports had been examined by a fat Serbian officer in a highly decorated uniform, my baggage was pounced on by a band of hairy brigands who, without paying the slightest attention to me, proceeded to fight among themselves for my bags. They shouted and cursed each other, exchanging lusty blows, and it was full twenty minutes before the victors piled my baggage into a miserable cab drawn by two starved horses, and allowed me to go, after heavy payment. My driver whipped up his bags of bones and started off on a wild career over the roads of Belgrade, that is to say, over rock-strewn quagmires and gaping pits. The carriage lurched from one side to another, with its wheels deep in the ruts, or high on piles of stones, and at times seemed to me that only a miracle could save me from instant death.

The city of Belgrade, perched high above the Danube, with old, narrow, filthy streets within its walls, was filled with crowds of peasants mobilized for the war which had not yet been declared. Many of them had come from remote villages, and looked as if they had come from the Middle Ages. Some wore sheepskin coats with the shaggy wool inside and the skin decorated with crude paintings or garish embroideries. Others had woolen

vests and a loose undergarment reaching like a kilt to their knees. Nearly all of them wore loose gaiters, worked with red stitches, or white woolen buskins. Others wore flat, oval sandals, almost as big as a tennis racquet, or shoes turned up at the toes with sharp peaks.

A wild cavalcade came riding down from the hills, like the hordes of Ghengis Khan. Their black hair was long and matted, beneath sheepskin caps or broad-brimmed hats. Pistols bristled in their red sashes, and they stood up, yelling, above saddles made of fagots tied to a piece of skin, cracking long whips, and urging on hairy little horses with rope reins and stirrups.

I had not been in Belgrade more than a few hours when I was arrested as an Austrian spy. Anxious to begin work as an "artist correspondent," I made a rough sketch of a crowd of reservists waiting to entrain. Suddenly two soldiers fell upon me, took me prisoner, and hauled me through the streets, followed by a yelling crowd. Speaking only Serbian, they paid no heed to my protests in English, French, and German. In the police headquarters, I had the same difficulty with the commandant, who had one language and perfect conviction that I was an Austrian and a spy. After a weary time, when I thought of a white wall and a firing party, an interpreter appeared and listened to my efforts at explanation in bad German. The sketch was what alarmed them, as well it might have done, if they had any artistic sense. Finally, I was allowed to go, after a close investigation of my papers.

That night news came that the Montenegrins had fired the first shots in a war that was now certain, though still undeclared, and the streets were thronged with crowds drunk with emotion. I went to a café filled with Serbian officers, most of whom were amateur soldiers who had been professors, lawyers, doctors, and business men in

civil life. They drank innumerable toasts, shouted and cheered, even wept a little.

At my table one, who spoke English, raised his glass and said, "Here's to our first meal in Constantinople!" Later, having drunk much wine, he confided to me in a whisper, that he was deeply anxious. No one knew the power of the Turk, and he added gloomily, "War is an uncertain thing."

There was an immense rally of correspondents, photographers, and cinema men in Belgrade, all desperate to get to the front with the Serbians, or the Bulgarians, or the Greeks. Some of the "old guard" were there, like Frederic Villiers, Henry Nevinson, and Bennett Burleigh, who had been in many campaigns before I was born. Frederic Villiers had a wonderful kit, with a glorious leather coat, and looked a romantic old figure. His pencil, his pocket knife, his compass, were fastened to his waist belt by steel chains. He still played the part of the war correspondent familiar in romantic melodrama. Among the younger crowd was Percival Phillips, afterward my comrade from first to last in a greater and longer war. It was then that I first become acquainted with his rapid way on a typewriter, on which he rattled out words like bursts of machine-gun fire.

After waiting about Belgrade for some days, I left Serbia and traveled to Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, where I hoped to be attached to the Bulgarian army. It was a horrible experience. Before the train started there was a wild stampede by a battalion of reservists and Bulgarian peasants. I narrowly escaped getting jabbed by long bayonets, as the men scrambled on to the train, storming the doorways and clambering on to the roof. When at last I got on board, I found myself wedged in the corridor between piles of baggage, peasants, and soldiers. I had only a piece of cheese and a little drop of brandy, and I cursed myself for my folly when I found

that the journey was likely to take two days. We stopped at every wayside station, and were then turned out at night on the platform at Sarabrot, hungry, chilled to the bone, with a biting wind and hard frost, and without a place in which to lay our heads.

Here we waited all night till dawn, and the one room in which there was shelter from the wind was crowded to suffocation by peasants lying asleep on their bundles, and was filled with a foul, sickening heat. One fantastic figure stood among the Serbians with their peaked caps, leather coats, and baggy white breeches. He wore a frock coat and tall hat, and looked as though he had just stepped out of the Rue de Rivoli. He was a French journalist on his way to the front!

Outside the station door there was, all night long, the tramp of soldiers, as battalion after battalion of Serbian troops marched up to entrain for the front. Officers moved up and down the ranks with lanterns which threw pallid rays of light upon these gray-clad men. Presently a long troop train came into Sarabrot, and the soldiers were packed into open trucks, so tightly that they could not move. Their bayonets made a quickset hedge above each truck. They were utterly silent. There was no laughing or singing now. These young peasants were like cattle being carried to the slaughterhouses.

It was a night of queer conversations for me. One man slouched up in the dim light, and said, "I guess you're an Englishman, anyhow?" I returned the compliment, saying, "You're an American, of course?" But I was wrong. He was a Bulgarian who had been in America for a few years and had now come back, in a thin flannel suit, and a straw hat, from a township in the Western states.

"I heard the call," he told me, "and I'm ready to take my place in the firing line. I'll be glad to give hell to the Turks."

I was as dirty as a Bulgarian peasant, and exhausted with hunger, when at last I reached Sofia.

Still war had not been declared, but its spirit reigned in Sofia. Outside the old white mosque, with its tall and slender minaret—the one thing of beauty which had been inherited from the Turks—there passed all day long companies of soldiers, heavily laden in their field kit, and bands of Macedonian volunteers. Through the streets there was the rumble of bullock wagons and forage carts, drawn by buffaloes. On the plain of Slivnitza, the old battle ground between the Bulgars and Serbians, there were great camps of the Macedonians who drilled all day long, and at intervals shouted strange war cries, and flung up their fur caps, while, from primitive bagpipes, there came a squealing as though a herd of pigs were being killed. In the ranks stood many young girls, dressed in the rough sheepskin jackets and white woolen trousers of their men folk, and serving as soldiers. Bullocks and buffaloes roamed in the outskirts of their camps, and when darkness crept down the distant mountains the light of camp fires turned a lurid glare upon the scene.

One night in Sofia a few of us heard that the Turkish Ambassador had handed in his papers, and driven to the station, where a train was waiting for him. That meant war. A few hours later King Ferdinand signed a manifesto, proclaiming it to his people, and then delayed its publication for twenty-four hours while he stole away from his capital, leaving his flag flying above the palace, to his headquarters at Stara Zagora. It was as though he was frightened of his people.

He need not have been. Those Bulgarian folk, whose sons and brothers were already on their way to the front, behaved as all people do when the spell of war first comes to them, before its disillusion and its horror. They greeted it as joyful tidings. The great bell of the cathe-

dral boomed out above the peals of innumerable bells with vaguely clashing notes. That morning in the cathedral, a Te Deum was sung before Queen Eleanor and all the Ministers of State. It was market day, and thousands of women had come in from the country districts, with market produce and great milk cans slung across their shoulders on big poles, glistening like quicksilver in the brilliant sunlight. In their white headdresses, short embroidered kirtles, and lace petticoats, they made a pretty picture as they pressed toward the great cathedral. The square was filled with Macedonian peasants, in their sheepskins and white woolen trousers, standing bareheaded and reverent before the cathedral doors. There were remarkable faces among them, belonging to young men with long flaxen hair, parted in the middle and waving on each side, like pictures of John the Baptist. Others were old, old fellows, with brown, rugged faces, white beards, and bent backs, who, in their ragged skins and fur caps, looked like a gathering of Rip van Winkles down from the mountains. . . .

After exasperating delays, the correspondents of all countries—a wild horde—who had come to describe this war, as though its bloody melodrama had been staged as a spectacle for a dull world, were allowed to proceed to Stara Zagora, where King Ferdinand had established his headquarters. A special train was provided for this amazing crowd, accompanied by the military *attachés*, and a large number of Bulgarian staff officers. The journey was uneventful, except for a strange sign in the heavens, which seemed a portent of ill omen for the Bulgarians. As night came over the Rhodope Mountains, there rose a crescent moon with one bright star in the curve of its scimitar. It was the Turkish emblem, and the Bulgarian officers, who had been chatting gayly in the corridor, became silent and moody.

In the town of Stara Zagora, which my humorous

friend Ludovic Nodeau called invariably Cascara Sagrada, I came in touch for the first time with the spirit of the Near East. It was Oriental in its architecture, in its dirt, in its smell, and in its human types. Turkish minarets rose above the huddle of houses. Turkish houses, with their lattice casements and ironwork grilles, high up in whitewashed walls, were among the Bulgarian hovels, shops, and churches. Mohammedan women, closely veiled, came into the market place, and young Turks and old squatted round the fountains, sat cross-legged inside their wooden booths, and smoked their *narghile* in dirty little cafés.

A strange people from the farther East dwelt in a village of their own outside the town—a village of houses so low that I was a head taller than their roofs when I walked down its streets, like Gulliver in Lilliput. Their doorways were like the holes of dog kennels and the inhabitants crawled in and out on their hands and knees. It was a gypsy village, swarming with wild-looking men—black-haired, sunburned to the color of terra cotta, wonderfully handsome—and with women and young girls clad in tattered gowns of gaudy color, with bare arms and legs, and the breast revealed. Children, stark naked, played among heaps of filth, and savage dogs leaped at every stranger, as they did when I went with two friends inside the village. A tall girl, beautiful as an Eastern houri, beat back the dogs and led us to the king of this Romany tribe, an old, old villain who made signs for money and was not satisfied with what I gave him. Presently he called to some women, and they brought out a girl of some fifteen years, like a little wild animal, with the grace and beauty of a woodland thing. She was for sale, and I could have bought her and taken her as my slave, for five French francs. I was tempted to do so, but did not quite know how I should get her back to my little house in Holland Street, Kensington, as a Christmas

present to my wife. Also, I was not certain whether my wife would like to adopt her. I declined the offer, therefore, but gave the old man the five francs as a sign of friendship—and as a bribe of safety.

We were surrounded, now, by a crowd of tall young Gypsies with long sticks, and I did not like the way they eyed us. Luckily, a Bulgarian police officer rode through the village, and at the sight of him, the Gypsies scuttled like rabbits in their holes. We kept close to his saddle until we were beyond the village, and by expressive gesticulation the man made us understand that, in his judgment, the place behind us was not a safe spot for Christian gentlemen.

One little trouble of mine, and of friends of mine, in Stara Zagora, was the question of food. There was one pretty good restaurant, set apart for the military *attachés* and high staff officers, but after they had dined well, while we hung around, sniffing their fat meats, there was nothing left for us. We were reduced to eating in a filthy little place, where the food was vile, and the chief method of washing plates was by the tongues of the hungry serving wenches, as I saw, through the kitchen door. Our billeting arrangements, also, left much to be desired, and with two inseparable companions, Horace Grant, of the *Daily Mirror,* and a young Italian photographer named Console, I slept in a pestilential house, so utterly foul that I dare not describe it. One little additional discomfort, to me, was the merry gamboling of a tribe of mice, who played hide and seek over my body as I lay in a coffinlike bed, and cleaned their whiskers on the window sill.

We were heartily glad to move forward from General Headquarters to the Turkish village of Mustapha Pasha, on the river Maritza, which had just been captured by the Bulgarians on their way to the siege of Adrianople.

My most dominant memory of this village, which was

the headquarters of the Bulgarian Second Army, may be summed up in the two words, mud and oxen. The "roads" were just quagmires, in which endless teams of oxen, with some buffaloes, dragging interminable batteries of heavy guns, ammunition wagons, and forage, wallowed deep. Stones, piled loosely, about a foot broad, at the edge of the track, made the only dry foothold for those who walked. But the Bulgarian army trudged through the slime, battalion after battalion, with flowers on their rifles, led forward by priests, dancing and waving their arms in an ecstasy of war fever, inspired by hatred of the Turk. The oxen snarled and snuffled, and constantly I had to avoid being tramped down by holding on to their curly horns or thrusting myself away from their wet nozzles. Strange groups of volunteers followed the army —family groups, with old grandfathers and grandmothers and grandma-aunties, with uncles and cousins and brothers, laden with tin pots and bundles, and armed with old sporting guns and country knives, and any kind of weapon useful for carving up a Turk.

One night, when the guns were furious round Adrianople, and the sky was lurid with bursting shells, I saw a division of Serbian cavalry pass through Mustapha Pasha. They had traveled far, and every man was asleep on his horse, which plodded on in the track of an old peasant with a lantern. I shall never forget the sight of those sleeping riders in the night.

Horace Grant, Console, and I were billeted in a farmhouse a mile or so outside Mustapha Pasha, kept by a tall, bearded Bulgarian peasant with his wife and mother, and three dirty little children. We slept on divans, as hard as boards, and fed on gristly old chickens killed beyond the doorposts. The family regarded us as though we had come from a far planet—mysterious beings, of incomprehensible ways—and our ablutions in the mornings, when we stripped to the waist and washed in a pail,

filled them with deep wonderment. It was our local reputation as "The men who wash their bodies" which liberated us from military arrest.

On the way to Mustapha Pasha and back again to our farmhouse, we had to pass a cemetery which was used as a camp. It was never a pleasant journey at night, because we stumbled over loose boulders, fell into three feet of mud, and were attacked by packs of wolflike dogs whose fierce eyes shone through the darkness. One night I felt a prick in the shoulder, and found I had run up against the sword of a Bulgarian officer who was feeling his way along the wall in pitch darkness. But it was when the Bulgarians were suddenly replaced by Serbians that we were challenged by a sentry and arrested by the guard, which rushed out at the sound of his shots. They could make nothing of us, and suspected the worst, until some peasants in the neighborhood came up and identified us as three men strangely addicted to cold water, but under the protection of Bulgarian headquarters.

Along the valley of the Maritza, on the way to Adrianople which was closely invested, the Turkish villages had been fired, and we saw the smoke rising above the flames, and then tramped through their ruins. Looting was strictly forbidden, under pain of death, but in one village old men and women were prowling about in a ghoullike way, and filling sacks with bits of half-burnt rubbish. Suddenly an old woman began to scream, and we saw her struggling with a Bulgarian soldier who threatened to run his bayonet through her body. The others fled, leaving their sacks behind.

That night, in a dirty little eating house, a Hungarian correspondent protested to his friends against the ruthless way in which the Bulgars had burned those Turkish homesteads. Upon leaving the restaurant he was arrested by military police and flung into a filthy jail, with the warning that he would rot to death there unless he

changed his opinion about the burning of the villages, and agreed that the Turks had fired them on their retreat. He decided to change his opinion. Later, however, he was riding alone when he was set upon by Bulgarian police, who seized his horse, flung him into a ditch, and kicked him senseless. It was a warning against careless table conversation.

We soon discovered that, instead of being treated as war correspondents, we were in a position more like that of prisoners of war. Strict orders were issued that we were not to go beyond a certain limit outside Mustapha Pasha, and the severity of the censorship was so great that my harmless descriptive articles about the scenes behind the lines, as well as my feeble sketches, were mostly canceled. I have to confess that I became a rebel against these orders, and, with my two companions, not only broke bounds, day after day, but smuggled through my articles at a risk which I now know was extremely rash. I hired a carriage with three scraggy horses, a chime of bells, and a Bulgarian giant, at enormous expense. It had once belonged to a Bulgarian priest, and was so imposing that when we drove out to the open country, toward Adrianople, we used to be saluted by the Bulgarian army.

I remember driving one day to a spur of hills overlooking the city of Adrianople, from which we could see the six minarets of the Great Mosque, and the high explosives bursting above its domes and rooms. A German —Doctor Bauer—and an Austrian—von Zifferer—accompanied us, and we picnicked on the hill with an agreeable excitement at getting even this glimpse of the "real business." I played a game of chess with von Zifferer, who carried a pocket set, and this very charming young Austrian accepted my lucky victory with good nature, and then asked a question which I always remembered:

"How long will it be before you and I are on opposite sides of a fighting line?"

It was not very long.

My experiences as a war correspondent in Bulgaria were farcical. I saw only the back wash of the bloody business—and I have a secret and rather wicked suspicion that the war correspondent of the old type did not see so much as his imaginative dispatches and thrilling sketches suggested to the public, nor one-thousandth part as much as that little body of men in the World War, who had absolute liberty of movement, and the acknowledged right of going to any part of the front, at any time. In Bulgaria, all we saw of the war was its slow-moving tide of peasant soldiers, trudging forward dejectedly, the tangled traffic of guns and transport, the misery—unimaginable and indescribable—of the wounded and the prisoners, stricken with cholera, packed, like slaughtered cattle, into railway trucks, tossed in heaps on straw-filled ox wagons, jolted to death over the ruts and boulders of unmade roads: Horrible pictures which gave me a little apprenticeship, but not much, for the sights of the war that was to come.

One little scene comes to my mind vividly. It was at dawn, in a way side station. King Ferdinand had arrived with his staff. The fat old man with piggy eyes was serving out medals to heroes of the siege of Adrianople. They were all wounded heroes, some of them horribly mutilated, so that, without arms or legs, they were carried by soldiers into the presence of the King. Others hobbled up on crutches, white and haggard. Others were blind. I could not see any pleasure in their faces, any sense of high reward, when they listened to Ferdinand's gruff speech while he fastened a bit of metal to their breasts. In the white mist of dawn they looked a ghastly little crowd of broken men.

I have already told, in a previous chapter, how old Fox Ferdinand conversed with me on the bridge over the Maritza at Mustapha Pasha. His friendliness then did

not allow me to escape his wrath a few days later, when he saw me considerably outside the area to which correspondents were restricted, and he sent over a staff officer to tell me that I should be placed under arrest unless I withdrew immediately.

I was arrested, and locked up for a time, with Horace Grant and Console, for the crime of accompanying a colleague to the railway station at Mustapha Pasha! That was when S. J. Pryor, of *The Times,* was leaving G.H.Q. to go back to Sofia. Being, as I thought, the proud owner of a carriage and three horses, to say nothing of my Bulgarian giant, I offered to give him with his luggage a lift to the station. He accepted gladly, but at the hour appointed I discovered that carriage, horses, giant, and all had disappeared from their stables. As I found out later, they had been "pinched" by G.H.Q. Pryor had not too much time to get his train, and Grant and Console and I volunteered to carry some of his bags. We arrived in time, but were immediately confronted by a savage Bulgarian general, who spluttered with fury, called up some hairy savages with big guns, and ordered them to lock us up in a baggage shed. Little S. J. Pryor was extremely distressed at this result of our service to him, but he could not delay his journey.

My friends and I were liberated from the shed after some hours of imprisonment, and conducted, under mounted escort, to Mustapha Pasha. A few nights later we were informed that we had been expelled from General Headquarters and must proceed back to filthy old "Cascara Sagrada." I had a violent scene with the Bulgarian staff officer and censor who conveyed this order, and told him that I intended to stay where I was, unless I was forcibly removed by the Bulgarian army!

He took me at my word, and that night, when Grant and I were finishing a filthy but comforting meal in our old farmhouse, far outside the village, there was a heavy

clump at the door, followed by the entry of six hairy-looking ruffians with fixed bayonets. One of them removed his sheepskin hat and plucked from his matted hair a small piece of paper, which was a written order for our expulsion signed by the General in Command of the Second Army.

I shall never forget Console at the moment of their arrival. Having finished his supper, he was lying asleep on the divan, but, suddenly awakened, sat up with all his hair on end, and grabbed a large loaded revolver from beneath his pillow. We did not allow him to indulge in a private massacre, but adopted a friendly demeanor to our guards—for we were their prisoners, all right—and gave them mugs of peasant wine as a token of good will. After a frightful scramble for our belongings, which were littered all over the room, we accompanied the hairy men to an ox wagon, where we sat in the straw, jolted in every limb and in every tooth, for the three miles back to the old station.

On the way we passed a battalion of Serbian infantry, and one of the officers carried on a cheery conversation with me in German. When he heard that I was a correspondent of *The Graphic,* he was delighted and impressed.

"Come with us!" he shouted. "We will show you some good fighting!"

"I would like to," I answered, "but I am a prisoner of these Bulgarians."

He thought I was joking, and laughed loudly.

Guarded by our soldiers—they were really a simple and sturdy little crowd of good-natured peasants—we were taken across a railway line to a dark train. Our guards laughed, shook hands, pushed us gently into the train, and said, *"Dobra den, Gospodin!"*

Then we had a surprise. The train was pitch dark, but not empty. It was filled with correspondents of all

nationalities, who, like ourselves, had been expelled! They were without food or drink or light; they had been there for half a day and part of a night; and they were furious.

That journey was a comedy and a tragedy. The train moved away some time in the night, and crawled forward that day and night toward "Cascara Sagrada," as Nodeau called that town of filth. We starved, parched with thirst, cramped together. But we laughed until we cried over the absurdity of our situation and a thousand jests.

Marinetti, the arch Futurist, was there, and after making impassioned love to a Bulgarian lady who could not understand his Italian or French, he recited his great Futurist poem, "L'Automobile," very softly at first, then with his voice rising higher, as the "automobile" gained speed, until it was like the bellow of a bull. In a wayside station, soldiers came running toward our carriage, with their bayonets handy, thinking some horrible atrocity was in progress. Marinetti was delighted with the success of Futurist poetry in Bulgaria!

At Stara Zagora I found wires were being pulled in London and Sofia, on my behalf, through the means of S. J. Pryor, who was a loyal friend, and one of the dearest men in the world. (He is my "Bellamy" in *The Street of Adventure.*) In a few days, Grant, Console, and I, alone among the expelled crowd, received permits to return to the Bulgarian headquarters, where our reappearance created consternation among the staff officers and censors, who thought they were well rid of us.

XVI

IN 1912, to which year I have now come in these anecdotes of journalistic life, England was not without troubles at home and abroad, but nothing had happened, or seemed likely to happen (except in the imagination of a few anxious and farseeing people), to touch more than the surface of her tranquillity, to undermine the foundations of her wealth, or to menace her security as a great imperial Power.

It was a very pleasant place for pleasant people, if they had a social status above that of casual, or sweated, labor. The aristocracy of wealth still went through the social ritual of the year, in country houses and town houses, from the London season to Cowes, from the grouse moors to the Riviera, agreeably bored, and finding life, on the whole, a good game, unless private passion wrecked it.

The great middle class, with its indeterminate boundaries, was happy, well-to-do, with a comfortable sense of ease and security, apart from the ordinary anxieties, tragedies, failures, of private and domestic life. People with "advanced" and extraordinary views made a lot of noise, but it hardly broke into the hushed gardens of the country houses of England. Labor was getting clamorous, with mock heroic threats of revolution, but was no real menace to the forces of law and order. Women were beginning to put forward claims to political equality with men, but their extravagance of talk had not yet been translated into wild action. The spirit of England was, in the mass, rooted to its old traditions, and its social habits were not overshadowed by any dread.

As a descriptive writer and professional onlooker of

life (writing history and fiction in my spare time), I had, perhaps, some deeper consciousness than most people outside my trade, of dangers brewing in the cauldron of fate. I touched English life in most of its phases, high and low, and was aware, vaguely, perhaps a little morbidly, of undercurrents beating up strongly below all this fair surface of tranquillity. As I shall tell later, I came face to face with three bogies of threatening aspect. One was Ireland in insurrection. Another was industrial conflict in England, linked up with that Irish menace. A third was war with Germany. Meanwhile, I chronicled the small beer of English life, and described its social pageantry—royal visits, the Derby, Henley, Fourth of June at Eton, the Eton and Harrow match, Ascot, Cowes, the Temple Flower Show, garden fêtes, Maud Allen's dancing, the opera, the theater, fancy dress balls.

There was a new passion for "dressing-up," in that England before the war. It seemed as though youth, and perhaps old age, desired more color than was allowed by modern sumptuary laws.

I attended a great fancy dress ball at the Albert Hall —one of many, but the most magnificent. All "the quality" was there, the most beautiful women in England, and the most notorious. I went, superbly, as Dick Sheridan, in pale blue silk, with lace ruffles, a white wig, white silk stockings, buckled shoes, a jeweled sword. It was strange how different a man I felt in those clothes. The vulgarity of modern life seemed to fall from me. I was an eighteenth-century gentleman, not only in appearance, but in spirit. I was my own great grandfather!

London that night was a queer sight anywhere within a mile of Kensington. Sedan chairs, carried by sturdy porters in old liveries, conveyed little ladies in hooped dresses and high wigs. Columbines flitted by with Pierrots. Out of taxicabs and hansoms and old growlers came parties of troubadours, English princesses with

horned headdresses, Spanish toreadors, Elizabethan buccaneers, Stuart cavaliers.

At the ball I saw the faces of my friends strangely transfigured. They, too, were their own ancestors. One of those I encountered that night was a fellow journalist named "Rosy" Leach. He swaggered in the form of a Stuart gentleman, and said, "What a game is this life!" The next time I met him was when he wore another kind of fancy dress—khaki-colored—with high boots caked up to the tabs in the mud of the Somme fields. "Death is nothing," he said, after we had talked a while. "It's what goes before—the mud and the beastliness." He was killed in one of those battles, like many others of those who danced with Columbine and the ladies of the gracious past.

This dressing-up phase was not restricted to London, or rich folks. There was a joyous epidemic of pageants, in which many old towns and villages of England dramatized their own history and acted the parts of their own ancestors. I was an enthusiast of this idea, and still think that for the first time since the Middle Ages it gave the people of England a chance of revealing their innate sense of drama and color and local patriotism. In most of these pageants the actors made their own costumes, and went to old books to learn something of ancient fashions, heraldry, arms and armor, and the history of things that had happened on their own soil and in their own cathedrals, churches, guild houses, and ruined castles, whose stones are haunted with old ghosts. The children in these pageants made fields of living flowers. Youth was lovely in its masquerade. Some of the pictures made by the massed crowds were unforgetable, as in the Oxford pageant, when Charles held his court again, and in the St. Albans pageant, when the English archers advanced behind flights of whistling arrows. If one had any sense of the past, one could not help being stirred by the con-

tinuity of English life, its unbroken links with ancient customs, its deep roots in English soil. At Bury St. Edmunds there was a scene depicting the homage of twenty-two gentlemen to Mary Tudor. Each actor there bore the same name and held the same soil as those who had actually bowed before the Tudor lady. It is why tradition is strong in the character of our race, and steadies it.

There was a comic and pitiful side to these shows, mainly caused by the weather, which was pitiless, so that often the pageant grounds were quagmires, and ancient Britons, Roman soldiers, Saxon princesses, Stuart beauties, had to rush for shelter from rain storms which bedraggled them. But that was part of the game.

London dreamed not at that time of darkened lights, prohibited hours for drink, the heavy hand of war upon the pleasures and follies of youth. Was there more folly than now? Perhaps vice flaunted more openly. Perhaps temptation spread its net with less need of caution—though I doubt whether there has been much change in morals, despite the park pouncing of policemen. There was more gayety in London, more lights in London nights, more sociability, good and bad, a great freedom of spirit, in those days before the war. So it seems to us now.

I was never one of the gilded youth, but sometimes I studied them in their haunts, not with gloomy or reproving eyes, being tolerant of human nature, and glad of laughter.

One wild night began when the policeman on point duty in Piccadilly Circus thought that the last revelers had gone home in the last taxis, but he was a surprised man when life seemed to waken up again and there was the swish of motor cars through the circus and bands of young men walking in evening dress, not, apparently, on their way to bed, but just beginning some new adventure.

They advanced upon the Grafton Galleries singing a little ballad that marks the date:

"Hullo, hullo, hullo!
It's a different girl again!
Different hair, different clothes,
Different eyes, different nose . . ."

This affair had been kept a dead secret from press and public. It was a "glorious stunt" which had for its amiable object the introduction of all the prettiest girls of the theater world to all the smartest bloods of the universities and clubs. It was entitled the Butterfly Ball.

Certainly there were some astoundingly beautiful girls at this assembly, and not a few of them. The university boys were, for a time abashed by so much loveliness. But they brightened up, especially when the most famous sporting peer of England—Lord Lonsdale—led off the dance with a little girl dressed, rather naughtily, as a teetotum. By the time I left—a kind of Pierrot looking on at the gayety of life—there was a terrific battle in progress between groups of boys and girls, with little white rolls of bread as their ammunition. Not commendable. Not strictly virtuous, nor highly proper, but in its wildness there was the spirit of a youth which, afterward, was heroic in self-sacrifice. . . . So things happened in London before the war.

A series of articles appearing in *The Daily Mail,* by Robert Blatchford, once a Socialist and still on the democratic side of political life, disturbed the sense of security in the average mind by a slight uneasiness. Not more than that, because the average mind had its inherited faith in our island inviolability and the power of the British Navy. There were articles entitled "Am Tag," which is bad German, and they professed to reveal a determina-

tion in the military and naval castes of Germany to destroy the British fleet, invade England, and smash the British Empire.

Some of the evidence brought forward seemed childish in its absurdity. There were not many facts to a wealth of rhetoric. But they created a newspaper sensation, and were pooh-poohed by the government, as we now know, with utter insincerity—for there were members of that government who knew far more than Blatchford how deep and widespread was German hostility to Great Britain, and how close Europe stood to a world war.

One fantastic little incident connected with those articles of Blatchford's amused me considerably at the time, though afterward I thought of it as a strange prophecy.

I called on W. T. Stead one day in his office of *The Review of Reviews,* which afterward I was to edit for a year. It was just before lunch time, and Stead had an engagement with Spender of *The Westminster Gazette.* But he grabbed me by the arm, in his genial way, and said, "Listen to this for a minute, and tell me what you think of it."

It appeared that he had been rather upset by Blatchford's articles. He could not make up his mind whether they were all nonsense or had some truth at the back of them. He decided to consult the spirit world through "Julia," his medium.

"We rang up old Bismarck, Von Moltke, and William II of Prussia. 'Look here,' I said, 'Is there going to be war between Germany and England?' "

The spirits of these distinguished Germans seemed uncertain. Bismarck saw a red mist approaching the coast of England. Von Moltke said the British fleet had better keep within certain degrees of latitude and longitude—which was kind of him! One of the trio—I

forget which—said there would be war between Germany and England. It would break out suddenly, without warning.

"When?" asked W. T. Stead.

A date was given. *It was the month of August.* The year was not named.

I laughed heartily at Stead's anecdote, especially when he told me the effect this announcement had upon him. He was so disturbed that he went round to the Admiralty, interviewed Lord Fisher, who was a friend of his, and revealed the dread message that the German fleet was going to attack in August. (It was then May, 1912).

Fisher leaned back in his chair, smiled grimly, and said, *"No such luck, my boy!"*

In August of that year I was engaged in trouble which did not seem connected with Germany, though I am inclined to think now that German agents were watching it very closely—especially one German baron who posed as a journalist and was always reporting on industrial unrest in Great Britain, wherever it happened to break out. I had met him at Tonypandy, in Wales, during the miners' riots down there, and I met him again in Liverpool, which was now in the throes of a serious strike.

It was the nearest thing to civil war I have seen in any English city. I have forgotten the origin of the strike—I think it began with the dockers—but it spread until the whole of the transport service was at a standstill, and the very scavengers left their work. The Mersey was crowded for weeks with shipping from all the ports of the world, laden with merchandise, some of it perishable, which no hands would touch. No porters worked in the railway goods yards, so that trains could not be unloaded. There was no fresh meat, and no milk for babes. Not a wheel turned in Liverpool. It was like a besieged city, and presently, in hot weather, began to stink in a pesti-

lential way, because of the refuse and muck left rotting in the streets and squares.

This refuse, among which dead rats lay, was so filthy in one of the best squares of Liverpool outside the hotel where I was staying, that a number of journalists, and myself, borrowed brooms, sallied out, swept up the rubbish heaps, and made bonfires of them, surrounded by a crowd of angry men who called us "scabs" and "blacklegs," and threatened to "bash" us, if we did not stop work. We stuck to our job, and were rewarded by a clapping of hands from ladies and maidservants in the neighboring windows, so that our broomsticks seemed as heroic as the lances of chivalry.

Some bad things happened in Liverpool. The troops were stoned by mobs of men who were becoming sullen and savage. Shops were looted. I saw no less than forty tramcars overturned and smashed one afternoon in that sunny August, because they were being driven by men who had refused to strike.

On that afternoon I saw something of mob violence, which I should have thought incredible in England. A tramcar was going at a rapid pace, driven by a man who was in terror of his life because of a mob on each side of the road, threatening to stone him to death. Inside the car were three women and a baby. A fusillade of stones suddenly broke every window. Two of the women crouched below the window frames, and the third woman, with the baby, utterly terrified, came on to the platform outside, and prepared to jump. A stone struck her on the head, and she dropped the baby into the roadway, where it lay quite still. A gust of hoarse laughter rose from the mob, and not one man stirred to pick up the baby. Terrible, but true. It was left there until a woman ran out of a shop. . . . Wedged behind the men, but a witness of all that happened, I was conscious then of a cruelty lurking in the vicious elements of our great

cities which, before, I had not believed to exist in England of the twentieth century. If ever there were revolution in England, it would not be made with rose water.

The troops and police were patient and splendid in their discipline, despite great provocation at times. Now and again, when the mob started looting or stone throwing, the police made baton charges, which scattered crowds of young hooligans like chaff before them, and they thrashed those they caught without mercy. At such times I had to run like a hare, for there is no discrimination in treatment of the innocent.

One afternoon the troops were ordered to fire on a crowd which made an attempt to attack an escort of prisoners, and there was a small number of casualties. That night I had an exciting narrative to dictate over the telephone to the office of *The Daily Chronicle.* But, in the middle of it, the sub-editor, MacKenna, who was taking down my message, said, "Cut it short, old man! Something is happening to-night more important than a strike in Liverpool. *The German fleet is out in the North Sea, and the British fleet is cleared for action!*"

When I put down the telephone receiver, I felt a shiver go down my spine; and I thought of Stead's preposterous story of war in August. Had it happened?

There was nothing in next day's papers. Some iron censorship closed down on that story of the German fleet, true or false. . . . As we now know, it was true. The German fleet did go out on that night in August, but finding the British fleet prepared, they went back again. It was in August of another year that Germany put all to the great hazard.

The thoughts of the English people were not obsessed with the German menace. For the most part they knew nothing about it, apart from newspaper "scares," which

they pooh-poohed, and no member of the government, getting anxious now in secret conversations, took upon himself the duty of preparing the nation for a dreadful ordeal.

England was excited by two subjects of sensational interest and increasing passion—the mania of the militant suffragettes, and the raising of armed forces in Ireland, under the leadership of Sir Edward Carson, to resist Home Rule.

I saw a good deal of both those phases of political strife in England and Ireland. The suffragette movement kept me in a continual state of mental exasperation, owing to the excesses of the militant women on one side, and the stupidity and brutality of the opponents of women's suffrage on the other. I became a convinced supporter of "Votes for Women," partly because of theoretical justice which denied votes to women of intellect, education, and noble work, while giving it to the lowest, most ignorant, and most brutal ruffians in the country, partly because of a sporting admiration—in spite of intellectual disapproval—of cultured women who went willingly to prison for their faith, defied the police with all their muscular strength, risked the brutality of angry mobs (which was a great risk), and all with a gay, laughing courage which mocked at the arguments, anger, and ridicule of the average man.

Many of the methods of the "militants" were outrageous, and loosened, I think, some of the decent restraints of the social code, for which we had to pay later in a kind of sexual wildness of modern young women. But they were taunted into "direct action" by Cabinet Ministers, and exasperated by the deliberate falsity and betrayal of members of Parliament, who had pledged themselves at election time to support the demand of women for the suffrage, by constitutional methods.

A number of times I watched the endeavors of the

"militants" to present a petition to the Prime Minister or invade the Houses of Parliament. Always it was the same scene. The deputation would march from the Caxton Hall through a narrow lane in the midst of a vast crowd, and then be scattered in a rough and tumble scrimmage when mounted police rode among them.

Often I saw a friend of mine walking by the side of these deputations, as a solitary bodyguard. It was H. W. Nevinson, the war correspondent, with his fine ruddy face and silvered hair, a paladin of woman suffrage as of all causes which took "liberty" for their watchword. The crowd was less patient of men sympathizers of militant women than with the women themselves, and Nevinson was roughly handled. At a great demonstration at the Albert Hall, he fought single-handed against a dozen men stewards who fell upon him, when he knocked down a man who had struck a woman a heavy blow. Nevinson, though over fifty at the time, could give a good account of himself, and some of those stewards had a tough time before they overpowered him and flung him out.

Round the Houses of Parliament, on those nights of attack, there were strong bodies of police who played games of catch-as-catch-can with little old ladies, frail young women, strong-armed and lithe-limbed girls who tried to break through their cordon. One little old cripple lady used to charge the police in a wheel chair. Others caught hold of the policemen's whistle chains, and would not let go until they were escorted to the nearest police station. One night dozens of women chained and padlocked themselves to the railings of the House of Commons, and the police had to use axes to break their chains.

There was a truly frightful scene, which made me shiver, one night, when those "militants" refused to budge before the mounted police and seized hold of their bridles and stirrup-leathers. The horses, scared out of their wits

by these clinging creatures, reared, and fell, but nothing would release the grip of those determined and reckless ladies, though some of them were bruised and bleeding.

The patience and good humor of the police were marvelous, but I was sorry to see that they made class distinctions in their behavior. They were certainly very brutal to a party of factory girls brought down from the North of England. I saw them driven into a narrow alley behind Westminster Hospital, and the police pulled their hair down, wound it round their throats, and flung them about unmercifully. It was not good to see.

I had several talks at the time with the two dominant leaders of the militant section, Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel, and I was present at their trial, when they were indicted for conspiracy to incite a riot. Mrs. Pankhurst's defense was one of the most remarkable speeches I have ever heard in a court of law, most eloquent, most moving, most emotional. Even the magistrate was moved to tears, but that did not prevent him from setting aside an unrepealed statute of Charles II (which allowed a deputation of not more than thirteen to present a petition, without let or hindrance, to the King's ministers) and sentencing Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughter to two years' imprisonment.

I saw Christabel Pankhurst during the course of the trial, and she asked me whether I thought she would be condemned. I told her "Yes," believing that she had the strength to hear the truth, and afterward, when she asked me how much I thought she would get, I said "Two years." I had an idea from her previous record that she was ready for martyrdom at any cost, but to my surprise and dismay, she burst into tears. Her defense and cross-examination of witnesses were also marred by continual tears, so that it was painful to listen to her. Her spirit seemed quite broken, and she never took part again in any militant demonstrations, although she was

liberated a short time after the beginning of her imprisonment. She worked quietly at propaganda in Paris.

One nation watched the mania of the "wild, wild women" with a growing belief in England's decadence, as it was watching the Irish affairs, and industrial unrest. German agents found plenty to write home about.

XVII

ONE day in 1913, I was asked by Robert Donald to call on a Canadian professor who had been engaged in "a statistical survey of Europe," whatever that may mean, and might have some interesting information to give.

When he received me, I found him a little, mild-eyed man, with gold-rimmed spectacles, behind which I presently discovered the look of one obsessed by a knowledge of some terrific secret. That was after he had surprised me by declining to talk about statistics, and asking abruptly whether I was an honest young man and a good patriot. Upon my assuring him that I was regarded as respectable by my friends and was no traitor, he bade me shut the door and listen to something which he believed it to be his duty to tell, for England's sake.

What he told me was decidedly alarming. In pursuit of his "statistical survey of Europe" on behalf of the Canadian and American governments, he had spent two years or so in Germany. He had been received in a courteous way by German professors, civil servants, and government officials, at whose dinner tables he had met German celebrities, and high officers of the German army. They had talked freely before him after some time, and there was revealed to him, among all these people, a bitter, instinctive, relentless, and jealous hatred of England. They made no secret that the dominant thought in their souls was the necessity and inevitability of a conflict with Great Britain, in order to destroy the nation which stood athwart their own destiny as their greatest commercial competitor, and as the one rival of their own

sea power, upon which the future of Germany was based. For that conflict they were preparing the mind of their own people by intensive propaganda and "speeding up" the output of their naval and military armament. "England," said my little informant, "is menaced by the most fearful struggle in history, but seems utterly ignorant of this peril, which is coming close. Is there no one to warn her people, no one to open their eyes to this ghastly hatred across the North Sea, preparing stealthily for their destruction? Will you not tell the truth in your paper, as I now tell it to you?"

I told him it would be difficult to get such things published, and still more difficult to get them believed. I had considerable doubt myself whether he had not exaggerated the intensity of hatred in Germany, and, in any case, the possibility of their daring to challenge Great Britain, as long as our fleet maintained its strength and traditions. But I was disturbed. The little man's words coincided with other warnings I had heard, from Lord Roberts, from visitors to Germany, from Robert Blatchford—to say nothing of W. T. Stead and his German "spooks." . . . Robert Donald, of *The Daily Chronicle,* laughed at my report of the conversation. "Utter rubbish!" was his opinion, and he refused to print a word.

"Go to Germany yourself," he said, "and write a series of articles likely to promote friendship between our two peoples and undo the harm created by newspaper hate-doctors and jingoes. Find out what the mass of the German people think about this liar talk."

So I went to Germany, with a number of introductions to prominent people and friends of England.

It was not the first time I had visited Germany, because the previous year, I think, I had been to Hamburg with a party of journalists, and we were received like princes, fêted sumptuously, and treated with an amazing display of public cordiality. There was private courtesy, too,

most kind and amiable, and I always remember a young poet who took me to his house and introduced me to his beautiful young wife who, when I said good-by, gathered some roses from her garden, put them to her lips, and said, "Take these with my love to England."

But something had happened in the spirit of Germany since that time. The first "friend of England" to whom I presented a letter of introduction was a newspaper editor in Düsseldorf, a man of liberal principles who had taken a great part in arranging an exchange of visits between German and British business men. He knew many of the Liberal politicans in England and could walk into the House of Commons more easily than I could.

He seemed to be rather flustered when I called upon him and explained the object of my visit, and he left me alone in his study for a while, on pretext of speaking to his wife. I think he wanted me to read his leading article, signed at the foot of the column, in a paper which he laid deliberately on his desk before me. I puzzled through its complicated argument in involved German, and through its fog of rhetoric there emerged a violent tirade against England.

When he came back, I tackled him on the subject.

"I understood that you were an advocate of friendly relations between our two peoples? That article doesn't seem to me very friendly or helpful."

He flushed a hot color, and said, "My views have undergone a change. England has behaved abominably."

The particular abomination which he resented most deeply was the warning delivered by Lloyd George—of all people in England!—that Great Britain would support French interests in Morocco, and would not tolerate German aggression in that region. That was at the time of the Agadir incident. The British attitude in that affair, said the Düsseldorf editor, was a clear sign that Great Britain challenged the right of Germany to develop

and expand. That challenge could not be left unanswered. Either Germany must surrender her liberty and deny her imperial destiny, at the dictation of Britain, or show that her power was equal to her aspirations. That, anyhow, was the line of his argument, which we pursued at great length over pots of lager beer, in a restaurant where we dined together.

I encountered the same argument, and more violent hostility, from a high ecclesiastic in Berlin, who was a great friend of the Kaiser's and formerly a professed lover of England. He was a tall, thin, handsome man, who spoke English perfectly, but was not very civil to me. Presently, as we talked of the relations between our two nations, he paced up and down the room with evident emotion, with suppressed rage, indeed, which broke at last through his restraint.

"English policy," he said, "cuts directly across our legitimate German rights. England is trying to hem in Germany, to hamper her at every turn, to humiliate her in every part of the world, and to prevent her economic development. During recent days she has not hesitated to affront us very deeply and deliberately. It is intolerable!"

He spoke of an "inevitable war" with startling candor, and when I said something about the duty of all Christian men, especially of a priest like himself, to prevent such an unbelievable horror, he asked harshly whether I had come to insult him, and touched the bell for my dismissal.

Such conversations were alarming. Yet I did not believe that they represented the general opinion of the great mass of German people. I was only able to get glimpses here and there in Düsseldorf and Frankfort, Hanover, Leipzig, Berlin, and Dresden of middle-class and working-class thought, but wherever I was able to test it in casual conversation with business men, railway porters, laborers, hotel waiters, and so on, with whom I

exchanged ideas in my very crude German, or their remarkably good English (in the case of commercial men and waiters), I found utter incredulity regarding the possibility of war between England and Germany, and a contempt of the sword-rattling and "shining armor" of the Kaiser and the military caste.

I was, for instance, in a company of commercial men at *Abendessen* in a hotel at Leipzig, when the topic of conversation was the Zabern affair, in which Lieutenant von Förstner had drawn his sword upon civilians—and a cripple—who had jeered at him for swaggering down the sidewalk like a popinjay. The Crown Prince had sent him a telegram of approbation for his defense of his uniform and caste. But, one and all, the commercial men with whom I sat expressed their loathing of this military arrogance, and were indignant with those who defended its absurdity. I remember the German who sat next to me had been a designer in a porcelain factory in the English potteries for many years. With him I talked quietly of the chance of war between England and Germany. "What is the real feeling of the ordinary folk in Germany?" I asked. He answered with what I am certain was absolute sincerity—though he was wrong, as history proved. He told me that, outside the military caste, there was no war feeling in Germany, and that the idea of a conflict with England was abhorrent and unbelievable to the German people. "If there were to be war with England," he said, "we should weep at the greatest tragedy that could befall mankind."

There were many people I met who held that view, without hypocrisy, and their sincerity at that time is not disproved because when the tocsin of war was sounded, the fever of hate took possession of them.

It was Edward Bernstein, the leader of the Socialists, who warned me of the instability of the pacifist faith professed by German democrats. "If war breaks out,"

he said, "German Socialists will march as one man against any enemy of the Fatherland. Although theoretically they are against war, neither they nor any other Socialists have reached a plane of development which would give them the strength to resist loyalty to the Flag and the old code of patriotism, when once their nation was involved, right or wrong."

I tried to get the ideas of German youth on the subject of war with England, and I had an excellent opportunity and an illuminating conversation with the students of Leipzig University. A group of these young men, who spoke excellent English, allowed me to question them, and were highly amused and interested.

"Do you hate England?" I asked.

There was a rousing chorus of "Yes!"

"Why do you hate England?"

One young man acted as spokesman for the others, who signified their assent from time to time. The first reason for hatred of England, he said, was because when a German boy was shown the map of the world and when he asked what all the red "splodges" on it signified, he was told that all that territory belonged to England. That aroused his natural envy. Later in life, said this young man, he understood by historical reading that England had built up the British Empire by a series of wars, explorations, and commercial adventures which gave her a just claim to possession. They had no quarrel with that. They recognized the strength and greatness of the English people in the past. But now they saw that England was no longer great. She was decadent and inefficient. Her day was done. They hated her now as a worn-out old monster who still tried to grab and hold, and prevent other races from developing their genius, but had no military power with which to defend their possessions. England was playing a game of bluff. Germany, conscious of her newborn greatness, her immense

industrial genius, her vital strength, needing elbow room and free spaces of the earth, would not allow a degenerate people to stand across her path. Germany hated England for her arrogance, masking weakness, and her hypocritical professions of friendship, which concealed envy and fear.

All this was said, at greater length, with admirable good humor and no touch of personal discourtesy. But it made me thoughtful and uneasy. The boy was doubtless exaggerating a point of view, but if such talk were taking place in German universities, it boded no good for the peace of the world.

I returned to England, perplexed, and not convinced, one way or the other. As far as I could read the riddle of Germany, public opinion was divided by two opposing views. The military caste, the old Junker crowd, and their satellites, ecclesiastical and official, with, probably the Civil Service, were beating up the spirit of aggression, and playing for war. The great middle class, and the German people in the mass, desired only to get on with their work, to develop their commerce, and to enjoy a peaceful home life in increasing comfort. The question of future peace or war lay with the view which would prevail. I believed that, without unnecessary provocation on the part of England, rather with generous and friendly relations, the peaceful disposition of the German people would prevail over the military caste and its intensive propaganda. . . .

I was wrong, and the articles I wrote in an analytical but friendly spirit were worse than useless, though I am still convinced that the German people as a whole did not want war, until their rulers persuaded them that the Fatherland was in danger, called to their patriotism, and let loose all the primitive emotions, sentiments, ideals, passions, and cruelties which stir the hearts of peoples, when war is declared.

After that visit to Germany, I went several times to Ireland, and although there seemed to be no link between these two missions, I am certain now that in the mind of German agents, politicians, and military strategists, the situation in Ireland was not left out of account in their estimate of war chances. With labor "unrest" from the Clyde to Tonypandy, with suffragette outrages revealing a weakness and lack of virility (from the German point of view) in English manhood, and with Ireland on the edge of civil war which would involve great numbers of British troops, England was losing her power of attack and defense. So as we know, German agents, like the Baron von Zedlitz, were writing home in their reports.

Sir Edward Carson, afterward Lord Carson, with F. E. Smith, afterward Lord Birkenhead (so does England reward her rebels!) were arranging a bloody civil war in Ireland, which, but for a Great War, would have spread to England, without let or hindrance from the British government.

When the Home Rule Bill, under Asquith's premiership, was nearing its last stages, Carson raised an army of Ulstermen and invited every Protestant and Unionist to take a solemn oath in a holy league and covenant to resist Home Rule to the very death. I was an eyewitness of many remarkable and historic scenes when "King Carson," as he was called in irony by Irish Home Rulers, inspected his troops, made a triumphal progress through Ulster, stirring up old fires of racial and religious hatred.

There was a good deal of play-acting about all this, and Carson was melodramatic in all his speeches and gestures, with a touch of Irving in the rendering of his pose as a grim and resolute patriot and leader of Protestant forces, but there was real passion behind it all, and the sincerity of fanaticism. If it came to the ordeal of battle, these young farmers and shopkeepers who paraded in battalions before Carson and his lieuten-

ants, marching with good discipline, a strong and sturdy type of manhood, would fight with the courage and ruthlessness of men inspired by hatred and bigotry.

The British government pooh-poohed Carson's "army" and described it as an unarmed rabble. But a very brief inquiry convinced me that large quantities of arms were being imported into Belfast and distributed through Ulster. There was hardly a pretense at secrecy, and the Great Western Railway authorities showed me boxes bearing large red labels with the word "Firearms" boldly printed thereon. The proprietor of one of the Belfast hotels led me down into his cellars and showed me cases of rifles stacked as high as the ceiling. He told me they came from Germany. I went round to the gunsmith shops, and I was told that they were selling cheap revolvers "like hot cakes." There was hardly a man in Ulster who had not got a firearm of some kind or other. "It's good for business," said one of the gunsmiths, laughing candidly, "but one of these days the things will go off, and there will be the devil to pay. Why the British government allows it is beyond understanding."

The British government did not acknowledge the truth of it. I made a detailed report of my investigations to Robert Donald, who passed it on to Winston Churchill, and his comment was the incredulous remark, "Gibbs has had his leg pulled." But it was Churchill's leg that was pulled, very badly, and he must have had a nasty shock when there were full descriptive reports of a gun-running exploit, done with perfect impunity, by the conspiracy of Ulster officers and leaders, military advisers, and men of all classes, down to the jarveys of the jaunting cars. Carson had armed his troops—with German rifles and ammunition.

In view of later history, there must have been some gentlemen of Ulster whose consciences were twinged by those dealings with Germany, and by allusions made in

the heat of political speeches to their preference for the German Emperor rather than a Home-rule House of Parliament in Dublin.

Religious fanaticism was at the back of it all, in the minds of the rank and file. Catholic laborers were chased out of the shipyards by their Protestant fellow workers, and hardly a day passed without brutal assaults on them, as was proved by the list of patients in the hospitals suffering from bashed heads and bruised bodies. I saw with my own eyes gangs of Ulster Protestants fall upon Catholic citizens and kick them senseless. Needless to say, there was retaliation when the chance came, and woe betide any Ulsterman who ventured alone through the Catholic quarter.

The mediæval malignancy of this vendetta was revealed to me among a thousand other proofs by a draper's assistant in a shop down the Royal Avenue. I was buying a collar stud or something, and recognizing me as an Englishman, he began to talk politics.

"If they try to put Home Rule over us," he said, "I shall fight. I'm a pretty good shot, and if a Catholic shows his head, I'll plug him."

He pulled out a rifle, which he kept concealed behind some bundles of linen, and told me he spent his Saturday afternoons in target practice.

"What do you think of this? Good shooting, eh?"

He pulled out a handful of pennies and showed me how at so many paces (I forget the range) he had plugged the head of His Majesty, King George V. It seemed to me a queer way of proving his loyalty to the British crown and Constitution.

Carson's way of loyalty was no less strange. By what method of logic this great lawyer could justify, as a proof of loyalty and patriotism, his raising of armed forces to resist an Act of Parliament passed by the King with the consent of the people, passes my simple under-

standing. I can understand rebellion against the law and the Crown, for Liberty's sake, or for passion's sake, or for the destruction of civilization, or for the enforcement of any kind of villainy. But I cannot understand rebellion against the law and the Crown in order to prove one's passionate loyalty to the law, and one's ardent devotion to the King.

Nor can I understand how those who condemn the "direct action" of Labor in the way of general strikes and other methods of demanding "rights" (as Lords Carson and Birkenhead and Londonderry condemned such revolutionary threats), can uphold as splendid heroism the menace of bloody civil war by a minority which refused to accept the verdict of the government and peoples of Great Britain and Ireland.

Sir Edward Carson was an honest man, a great gentleman in his manner, a great lawyer in repute, but his blind bigotry, some dark passion in him, made him adopt a line of action which has caused much blood to flow in Ireland and made one of the blackest chapters in modern history. For it was the raising of the Ulster Volunteers which led to the raising of the Irish Republican Army, and the armed resistance to Home Rule which led to Sinn Fein, and a thousand murders. It might have led, and very nearly led to civil war in England as well as in Ireland. When the British Officers in the Curragh Camp refused to lead their troops to disarm Ulster, and resigned their commissions rather than fulfil such an order, the shadow of civil war crept rather close, and there were politicians in England who were ready to risk it, as when Winston Churchill raised the cry, "The Army versus the People."

But another shadow was creeping over Europe, and fell with a chill horror upon the heart of England, when, as it were out of the blue sky of a summer in 1914, there came the menace of a war which would call many great

nations to arms, and deluge the fields of Europe in the blood of youth. Ireland—suffragettes—industrial unrest, how trivial and foolish even were such internal squabbles when civilization itself was challenged by this abomination!

In June of 1914—June!—there was a great banquet given in London to the editors of German newspapers, where I renewed acquaintance with a number of men whom I had met the previous year in Germany. Lord Burnham, of *The Daily Telegraph,* presided over the gathering, and made an eloquent speech, affirming the unbreakable ties of friendship between our two peoples. There were many eloquent speeches by other British journalists, expressing their admiration for German character, science, art, and social progress. A distinguished dramatic critic was emotional at the thought of the old kinship of the German and English peoples. The German editors responded with equal cordiality, with surpassing eloquence of admiration for English liberty, literature, and life. There was much handshaking, raising of glasses, drinking of toasts. . . . It was two months before August of 1914.

XVIII

FLEET STREET in the days before the declaration of war was like the nerve center of the nation's psychology, and throbbed with all the emotions of fear, hysteria, incredulity, and patriotic fever, deadened at times by a kind of intellectual stupor, which took possession of her people.

It was self-convicted of stupendous ignorance. None of those leader writers, who for years had written with an immense assumption of knowledge, had revealed this imminence of the world conflict. Some of them had played a game of party politics with "the German menace," and had used it as a stick for their political opponents. *The Daily Mail,* favoring a big navy, and more capital ships, had led the chorus of "We want eight and we won't wait." *The Daily News,* favoring disarmament, had denied the existence of any aggressive spirit in Germany. According to the political color of the newspapers, Liberal or Tory, the question of German relations had been written up by the leader writers and news had been carefully selected by the foreign news editors. But the public had never been given any clear or authoritative guidance; they had never been warned by the press as a whole, rising above the political game, that the very life of the nation was in jeopardy, and that all they had and were would be challenged to the death. Murder trials, suffragette raids, divorce court news, the social whirligig, the passionate folly in Ireland, had been the stuff with which the press had fed the public mind to the very eve of this crash into the abyss of horror.

Even now, when war was certain, the press said, "It is

impossible!" as indeed the nation did, in its little homes, because their imagination refused to admit the possibility of that monstrous cataclysm. And when war was declared, the press said, "It will be over in three months." Indeed, men I knew in Fleet Street, old colleagues of mine, said, "It will be over in three weeks!" Their theory seemed to be that Germany had gone mad and that with England, France, and Russia attacking on all sides, she would collapse like a pricked bladder.

Looking back on that time, I find a little painful amusement in the thought of our immeasurable ignorance as to the meaning of modern warfare. We knew just nothing about its methods or machinery, nor about its immensity of range and destruction.

After the first shock and stupor, news editors began to get busy, as though this war were going to be like the South-African affair, remote, picturesque, and romantic. They appointed a number of correspondents to "cover" the various fronts. They engaged press photographers and cinema men. War correspondents of the old school, like Bennett Burleigh, H. W. Nevinson, and Frederick Villiers, called at the War Office for their credentials, collected their kit, and took riding exercise in the Park, believing that they would need horses in this war on the western front, as great generals—dear simple souls—believed that cavalry could ride through German trenches.

The War Office kept a little group of distinguished old-time war correspondents kicking their heels in waiting rooms of Whitehall, week after week, and month after month, always with the promise that wonderful arrangements would be made for them "shortly." Meanwhile, and at the very outbreak of war, a score of younger journalists, without waiting for War Office credentials, and disobeying War Office orders, dashed over to France and Belgium, and plunged into the swirl and backwash of this

frightful drama. Some of them had astounding and perilous adventures, in sheer ignorance, at first, of the hazards they took, but it was not long before they understood and knew, with a shock that changed their youthful levity of adventure into the gravity of men who have looked into the flames of hell, and the torture chamber of human agony. Henceforth, between them and those who had not seen, there was an impassable gulf of understanding. . . .

Owing to the rigid refusal of the War Office, under Lord Kitchener's orders, to give any official credentials to correspondents, the British press, as hungry for news as the British public whose little professional army had disappeared behind a deathlike silence, printed any scrap of description, any glimmer of truth, any wild statement, rumor, fairy tale, or deliberate lie, which reached them from France or Belgium; and it must be admitted that the liars had a great time.

A vast amount of lying was done by newspaper men who accepted the official statements of French Ministers, hiding the frightful truth of the German advance. It was an elaboration of the French *communiqués* which in the first weeks of the war were devoid of truth. But a great deal of imaginative lying was accomplished by young journalists, who at Boulogne, Calais, Dunkirk, Ghent, or Paris, invented marvelous adventures of their own, exaggerated affairs of outposts into stupendous battles, and defeated the Germans time and time again in verbal victories, while the German war machine was driving like a knife into the hearts of Belgium and France.

Reading the English newspapers in those early days of the war, with their stories of starving Germany, their atrocity-mongering, their wild perversions of truth, a journalist proud of his profession must blush for shame at its degradation and insanity. Its excuse and defense lie in the psychological storm that the war created in the

soul of humanity, from which Fleet Street itself—very human—did not escape; in the natural agony of desire to find some reason for hopefulness; in the patriotic necessity of preventing despair from overwhelming popular opinion in the first shock of the enemy's advance; and in the desperate anxiety of all men and women whose heritage and liberties were at stake, to get some glimpse behind the heavy shutters of secrecy that had been slammed down by military censorship.

I was one of those who did not wait for official permits, and plunged straightway into the vortex of the war game. In self-defense I must plead that I was not one of the liars! I did not manufacture atrocities, and had some temperamental difficulty in believing those that were true, because I believed in the decency of the common man, even in the decency of the German common man. I did not invent imaginary adventures, but found tragedy enough, and drama enough, in the things I saw, and the truth that I found. As I had two companions most of the time in those early days, whose honor is acknowledged by all who know them—H. M. Tomlinson and W. M. Massey—their evidence supported my own articles which, like theirs, revealed something to our people of the enormous history that was happening.

Strangely, as it now seems to me, I was appointed artist correspondent to *The Graphic,* as I had been in the Bulgarian war, and I actually made some sketches of French mobilization and preparations for war, which were redrawn and published. But my old paper, *The Daily Chronicle,* desired my services and I changed over to them, and abandoned the pencil for the pen, with *The Graphic's* consent, a few days after the declaration of war.

I had crossed over to Paris on the night the reservists had been called to the colors in England, although so far war had not been declared by England or France. But

the fleet was cleared for action, and ready, and that night destroyers were out in the English Channel and their searchlights swept our packet boat, where groups of Frenchmen who had been clerks, hairdressers, and shop assistants in England were singing "The Marseillaise" with a kind of religious ecstasy, while in the saloon a party of Lancashire lads were getting fuddled and promising themselves "a good time" on a week-end trip to Paris, utterly unconscious of war and its realities.

In *The Daily Chronicle* office in Paris, where I had done night duty so often, my friend and colleague, Henri Bourdin, was white to the lips with nervous emotion, and constantly answered telephonic inquiries from French journalists: "Is England coming in? Nothing official, eh? Is it certain England will come in? You think so? Name of God! why doesn't England say the word?"

It was the consuming thought in all French minds. They were desperate for an answer to their questions. Because of the delay, Paris was suspicious, angry, ready for an outbreak of passion against the English tourists, who were besieging the railway stations, and against English journalists, who were in a fever of anxiety.

I saw the unforgetable scenes of mobilization in Paris, which made one's very heart weep with the tragedy of those partings between men and women, who clung to each other and kissed for the last time—so many of them for the last time—and on the night of August 2nd I went with the first trainload of reservists to Belfort, Toul, and Nancy. All through the night, at every station in which the train stopped, there was the sound of marching men, and the song of "The Marseillaise":

"Formez vos bataillons!"

The youth of France was trooping from the fields and workshops, not in ignorance of the sacrifice to which they were called, not light-heartedly, but with a simple and

splendid devotion to their country which now, in remembrance, after the years of massacre and of disillusion, still fills me with emotion. . . .

I do not intend here to give a narrative of my own experiences of war. I have written them elsewhere, and what do they matter, anyhow, in those years when millions of men faced death daily and passed through an adventure of life beyond all power of imagination of civilized men? I will rather deal with the subject of the Press in war, and with the peculiar difficulties and work of the correspondents, especially in the early days.

For the first few months of the war we had no status whatever. Indeed, to be quite plain, we were outlaws, subject to immediate arrest (and often arrested) by any officer, French or British, who discovered us in the war zone. Kitchener refused to sanction the scheme, which had been fully prepared before the war, for the appointment of a small body of war correspondents whose honor and reputation were acknowledged, and gave orders that any journalist found in the field of war should be instantly expelled and have his passport canceled. The French were even more severe, and sent out stern orders from their General Headquarters for the arrest of any journalist found trespassing in the zone of war.

For some time, however, it was impossible to enforce these rules. The German advance through Belgium and Northern France was only a day or two, or an hour or two behind the stampede of vast populations in flight from the enemy. The roads were filled with these successive tides of refugees. The trains were stormed by panic-stricken folk, and even the troop trains found room in the corridors and on the roofs for swarms of civilians, men and women. Dressed in civilian clothes, unshaved and unwashed, like any of these people, how could a correspondent be distinguished or arrested? Who was going to bother about him? Even the spy mania which

seized France very quickly and feverishly did not create, for some time, a network of restriction close enough to catch us. I traveled for weeks in the war zone on a pass stamped by French headquarters, permitting me to receive the daily *communiqué* from the War Office in Paris. I had dozens of other passes and *permis de séjour* from local authorities and police, which enabled me to travel with perfect facility, provided I was able to bluff the military guards at the railway stations, who were generally satisfied with those bunches of dirty passes and official-looking stamps. There was, too, a dual control in France, and a divergence of views regarding war correspondents. The civil authorities—prefects, mayors, and police—favored our presence, desired to let us know the suffering and heroism of their people, and welcomed us with every courtesy, because we were English and their allies. Often they turned a blind eye to military commands, or were ignorant of the orders against us.

Massey, Tomlinson, and I, working together in close comradeship, in those first weeks of war, traveled in Northern France and Belgium with what now seems to me an amazing freedom. We were caught up in the tide of flight from French and Belgian cities. We saw the retreat of the French army through Amiens, from which city we escaped only a short time before the entry of Von Kluck's columns. We came into the midst of the British retreat at Creil, where Sir John French had set up his headquarters; mingled with the crowds of English and Scottish stragglers, French infantry and engineers, who were falling back on Paris, before the spearheads of the German invasion, with a world of tragedy behind them, yet with a faith in victory that was mysterious and sublime. We had no knowledge of the enemy's whereabouts and set out in simple ignorance for towns already in German hands, or alighted at stations threatened with immediate capture. So it was at Beauvais, where we

were the only passengers in a train that pulled over a bridge where a cuirassier stood by bags of dynamite ready to blow it up, and where the last of the civilian population had trudged away from streets strewn with broken glass. Only by a strange spell of luck did we escape capture by the enemy, toward whose line we went, partly in ignorance of the enormous danger, partly with foolhardy deliberation, and always drugged with desire to see and know the worst or the best of this frightful drama.

We were often exhausted with fatigue. On the day we came into a deserted Paris, stricken with an agony of apprehension that the Germans would enter, I had to be carried to bed by Tomlinson and Massey, as helpless as a child. A few days later, Massey, a strong man till then, but now ashen-faced and weak, could not drag one leg after another. We had worn down our nervous strength to what seemed like the last strand, yet we went on again, in the wagons of troop trains, sleeping in corridors, the baggage rooms of railway stations, or carriages crammed with French *poilus,* who told narratives of war with a simplicity and realism that froze one's blood.

We followed up the German retreat from the Marne, when the bodies of the dead were being buried in heaps and the fields were littered with the wreckage of battle, and then went north to Dunkirk, bombed every day by German aëroplanes, but crowded with French *fusiliers, marins,* Arabs, British aviators of the Royal Navy, and Belgian refugees. Here I parted for a time with Massey and Tomlinson, and in a brief experience as a stretcher bearer with an ambulance column attached to the Belgian army, saw into the flaming heart of war, at Dixmude, Nieuport, and other places, where I became familiar with the sight of death, dirty with the blood of wounded men, and sick with the agony of this human shambles—a story which I have told in my book, *The Soul of the War.*

Other men, old friends of mine in Fleet Street, were having similar adventures, taking the same, or greater, hazards, dodging the military authorities with more or less luck. Hamilton Fyfe, then of *The Daily Mail* and now editor of *The Daily Herald,* was caught in a motor car by a patrol of German Uhlans, and only escaped becoming a prisoner of war by an amazing freak of fortune. George Curnock, also of *The Daily Mail,* was arrested by the French as a spy, and very nearly shot. A little group of correspondents—among them Ashmead Bartlett —were flung into the *Cherche Midi* prison and treated for a time like common criminals. I happened to fall into conversation with a French officer, who had actually arrested them. He was strongly suspicious of me, and asked whether I knew these gentlemen, all of whose names he had in his pocket book. I admitted that I had heard of one or two of them by repute, and expected to be arrested on the spot. But this officer had been French master at an English public school and was anxious, for some reason, to get an uncensored letter to the head master. I told him I was going to England, and offered to take it. . . . I was not arrested that time.

Another adventurer was young Lucian Jones, son of the famous playwright, Henry Arthur Jones. He made frequent trips to the Belgian front and was one of the last to leave Antwerp after the siege, which was not a pleasant adventure when heavy shells smashed the houses on every side of him. As he made no disguise whatever of his profession and purpose, he was sent back to England and forbidden to show his face again. He took the next boat back, and was again arrested and flung into a dirty prison. His editor, who received word of his plight, sent a message to General Bridges, asking for his release, and obtained the brusque answer, "Let the fellow rot!"—only it was a stronger word than "fellow."

One great difficulty we had in those days was to get

our messages back to our newspapers. Sometimes we intrusted them to any chance acquaintance who was making his way to England. Several times we had to get back to the coast, in those terrible refugee trains, to bribe some purser on a cross-Channel steamer. When that became too dangerous—because it was strictly forbidden by the military and naval authorities—we made the journey to London, handed in our messages, and hurried back again the same day to France. The mental state of our newspaper colleagues exasperated us. They seemed to have no understanding whatever of what was happening on the other side, no conception of that world of agony. "Had a good time?" asked a sub-editor, hurrying along the corridor with proofs—and I wanted to choke him, because of his placid unconsciousness of the things that had seared my eyes and soul.

I could not bear to talk with men who still said, "It will be over in three months," and who still believed that war was a rather jolly, romantic adventure, and that our little professional army was more than a match for the Germans who were arrant cowards and no better than sheep. In Fleet Street, at that time, there was no vision of what war meant to the women of France and Belgium, to the children of the refugees, to the mothers and fathers of the fighting men. It had not touched us closely in those first weeks of war.

My vexation was great one morning, after one of these journeys home, when I missed the train to Dover, and my good comrades Massey and Tomlinson—by just a minute. Perhaps I should never see them again. They would be lost in the vortex.

"Take a special train," said my wife.

The idea startled me, not having the mentality or resources of a millionaire.

"It's worth it," said my wife, who is a woman of big ideas.

I turned to the station master, who was standing at the closed gates of the continental platform.

"How long would it take you to provide a special train?"

He smiled.

"No longer than it would take you to pay over the money."

"How much?"

"Twenty-two pounds."

I consulted my wife again with raised eyebrows, and she nodded.

I went into a little office, half undressed, and pulled out of my belt a pile of French gold pieces. By the time they had been counted and a receipt given—no more than three minutes—there was a train with an engine and three carriages, a driver and a guard, ready for me on the line to Dover. My small boy (as he was then) gazed in awe and admiration at the magic trick. I waved to him as the train went off with me. I was signaled all down the line, and in the stations we passed porters and officials stared and saluted as the train flashed by. Doubtless they thought I was a great general going to win the war! At Dover I was only one minute behind the express I had lost. Massey and Tomlinson were pacing the platform disconsolately at the loss of their comrade. They could not believe their eyes when I walked up and said "Hello!" So we went back to a new series of adventures.

I used with success, three times running, another method of getting my "dispatches" to Fleet Street. After the third time some intuition told me to change the plan. At that time, as all through the war, a number of King's messengers—mostly men of high rank and reputation—traveled continually between British G.H.Q. and the War Office, with private documents from the Commander-in-Chief. Three times did I accost one of these officers—a

different man each time—in an easy and confidential manner.

"Are you going back to Whitehall, Sir?"

"Yes. What can I do for you?"

"I shall be much obliged if you will put this letter in your bag, and deliver it at the War Office."

"Certainly, my dear fellow!"

My letter was addressed to *The Daily Chronicle,* care of the War Office, and, much to the surprise of my editor, was punctually delivered, by a War-Office messenger. But my intuition was right. After the third time the editor of *The Daily Chronicle* received word from the War Office that if Gibbs sent any more of his articles by King's messenger, they would be destroyed.

The method of delivery became easier afterward, because the newspapers organized a series of their own couriers between England and France, and that system served until the whole courier service was rounded up and forbidden to set foot in France again.

It was amazing that my articles, and those of my fellow correspondents, were allowed to appear in the newspapers, in spite of military prohibition. But the press censorship, which had been set up by the government under the control of F. E. Smith, now Lord Birkenhead, was not under direct military authority, and was much more tolerant of correspondents who evaded military regulations. I wrote scores of columns during the first few months of the war, mostly of a descriptive character, and very few lines were blacked out by the censors. So far from being in the black books of the press censorship as established at that time, I was sent for by F. E. Smith, who thanked me for my narratives and promised to give personal attention to any future dispatches I might send. This was at the very time when Kitchener himself gave orders for my arrest, after reading a long article of mine from the Belgian front.

I was also received several times by Sir William Tyrrell, Secretary to the Foreign Office, who questioned me about my knowledge of the situation and begged me to call on him whenever I came back, although he knew that orders had been given to cancel my passport and that I was in the black book, for immediate arrest, at any port. It was Sir William Tyrrell, indeed, who, with great kindness provided me with a new passport after I had fallen into very hot water indeed.

It was F. E. Smith who read, approved, and even strengthened by a phrase or two, a sensational dispatch written by my friend Hamilton Fyfe and a colleague named Moore, which revealed for the first time to the British nation the terrible ordeal and sacrifice of the little Regular Army in the retreat from Mons. It was too sensational, perhaps, in its account of "broken divisions," and "remnants of battalions"; and its tone was too tragic and despairing, so that there was one black Sunday in England which will never be forgotten by those who lived through it, because there seemed no hope for the British Army, or for France.

As it happened, Massey, Tomlinson, and I had covered the same ground as Fyfe and his companion, had seen the same things, and had agonized with the same apprehension. But owing largely, as I must honestly and heartily say, to the cool judgment and fine faith of Tomlinson, our deduction from those facts and the spirit of what we wrote was far more optimistic—and future history proved us to be right—so that they helped to restore confidence in England and Scotland, when they appeared on Monday morning, following Fyfe's terrible dispatch.

But Fyfe did a great service to the nation and the Allies, by the truth he told, somewhat overcolored as it was. It awakened Great Britain from its false complacency. It revealed to the nation, for the first time, the awful truth that our little Regular Army, magnificent

as it was, could not withstand the tremendous weight of the German advance on the left flank of the French, was not sufficient to turn the scales of victory in favor of France, and was in desperate need of reinforcements from the untrained manhood at home. It shook the spirit of England like an earthquake, and brought it face to face with the menace of its life and liberties. For if France went down, we should follow. . . . The recruiting booths were stormed by the young manhood of England and Scotland, who had not joined up because they had believed that myth: "The war will be over in three months."

There was tremendous anger in the War Office at the publication of that article by Fyfe and Moore, and F. E. Smith, as the press censor, was severely compromised.

The truth was that the military mind was obsessed with the necessity of fighting this war—"our war" as the regulars called it—in the dark, while the nonmilitary mind knew that such a policy was impossible, and might be disastrous, in a war costing such a frightful sum of life, and putting such a strain upon the nation's heart and spirit.

Looking back on my experiences as an unauthorized correspondent in that early part of the war, I must confess now that I was hardly justified in evading military law, and that I might have been found guilty, justly, of a serious crime against the Allied cause. By some frightful indiscretion (which I did not commit) I or any other of those correspondents might have endangered the position of our troops, or the French army, by giving information useful to the enemy.

The main fault, however, lay with the War Office, and especially with Lord Kitchener, whose imagination did not realize that this war could not be fought in the dark, as some little affair with Indian hillmen on the northwest frontier. The immense anxiety of the nation, with its army fighting behind the veil while the fate of civilization

hung in the balance, could not and would not be satisfied with the few lines of official *communiqués* which told nothing and hid the truth. . . .

Gradually the net was drawn tighter, until, in the first months of 1915, it was impossible for any correspondent to travel in the war zone without arrest. I had come home to get a change of kit, as my clothes were caked with blood and mud, after supporting wounded men in Belgium. It was then that I heard of Kitchener's orders for my arrest and was greeted with surprise and apprehension by Robert Donald and the staff of *The Daily Chronicle,* who had sent over two messengers (who had never reached me) to warn me of my peril.

Next time I went to France I was provided with wonderful credentials as a special commissioner of the British Red Cross, with instructions to report on the hospital and medical needs of the army in the field. These documents were signed by illustrious names, and covered with red seals. I was satisfied they would pass me to any part of the front. . . . I was arrested before I left the boat at Havre and taken by two detectives to General Williams, the camp commander. He raged at me with an extreme violence of language, took possession of my passport and credentials, and put me under open arrest at the Hotel Tortoni, in charge of six detectives. Here I remained for ten days or so, unable to communicate my ignominious situation to the authorities of the Red Cross, upon whose authority I had come. Fortunately I became good friends with the detectives, who were excellent fellows, and with whom I used to have my meals. It was by the kindness of one of them that I was able to send through a message to the editor of *The Daily Chronicle,* and shortly afterward General Williams graciously permitted me to return to England.

It looked as though my career as a war correspondent had definitely closed. I had violated every regulation. I

had personally angered Lord Kitchener. I was on the black books of the detectives at every port, and General Williams solemnly warned me that if I returned to France, I would be put up against a white wall, with unpleasant consequences.

Strange as it appears, the military authorities blotted out my sins when at last they appointed five official war correspondents with a recognized status in the British armies on the Western Front. No longer did I have to dodge staff officers, and disguise myself as a refugee. In khaki, with a green armlet denoting my service, I could face generals, and even the Commander-in-Chief himself, without a quiver, and with my four comrades was recognized as an officer and a gentleman, with some reservations.

XIX

THE appointment and work of five official war correspondents (of whom I was one from first to last) caused an extraordinary amount of perturbation at British General Headquarters. Staff officers of the old Regular Army were at first exceedingly hostile to the idea, and to us. They were deeply suspicious that we might be dirty dogs who would reveal military secrets which would imperil the British front. They had a conviction that we were "prying around" for no good purpose, and would probably "give away the whole show."

Fear, personal and professional, was in the minds of some of the generals, it is certain. We found that many of the regulations to which we were subject—until we broke them down—were much more to safeguard the reputation and cover up the mistakes of the High Command than to prevent the enemy from having information which might be of use to him. They were afraid of the British public, of politicians, and of newspapers, and were profoundly uneasy lest we should dig up scandals, raise newspaper sensations, and cause infernal trouble generally.

I can quite sympathize with their nervousness, for if newspapers had adopted ordinary journalistic methods of sensation mongering, the position of the Army Command would have been intolerable. But this must be said for the newspaper press in the Great War—whatever its faults, and they were many—proprietors and editors subordinated everything to a genuine and patriotic desire to "play the game," to support the army, and to avoid any

criticism or controversy which might hamper the military chiefs or demoralize the nation.

As far as the five war correspondents were concerned, we had no other desire than to record the truth as fully as possible without handing information to the enemy, and to describe the life and actions of our fighting men so that the nation and the world should understand their valor, their suffering, and their achievement. We identified ourselves absolutely with the armies in the field, and we wiped out of our minds all thought of personal "scoops," and all temptation to write one word which would make the task of officers and men more difficult or dangerous. There was no need of censorship of our dispatches. We were our own censors.

That couldn't be taken for granted, however, by G.H.Q. They were not sure at first of our mentality or our honor. The old tradition of distrust between the army and the rest was very strong until the New Army came into being, with officers who had not passed through Sandhurst but through the larger world. They were so nervous of us in those early days that they appointed a staff of censors to live with us, travel with us, sleep with us, read our dispatches with a mass of rules for their guidance, and examine our private correspondence to our wives, if need be with acid tests, to discover any invisible message we might try to smuggle through.

We had to suffer many humiliations in that way, but fortunately we had a sense of humor and laughed at most of them. Gradually also—very quickly indeed—we made friends with many generals and officers commanding divisions, brigades, and battalions, broke down their distrust, established confidence. They were surprised to find us decent fellows, and pleased with what we wrote about the men. They became keen to see us in their trenches or their headquarters. They wanted to show us their particular "peepshows," they invited us to see special

"stunts." Their first hostility evaporated, and was replaced by cordial welcome, and they laughed with us, and sometimes cursed with us, at the continued restrictions of G.H.Q., which forbade the mention of battalions and brigades (well known to the enemy) whose heroic exploits we described.

For some time G.H.Q., represented by General Macdonagh, Chief of Intelligence, under whose orders we were, maintained a narrow view of our liberties in narration and description. Hardly a week passed without some vexatious rule to cramp our style by prohibiting the mention of facts far better known to the Germans than to the British, whose men were suffering and dying without their own folk knowing the action in which their sacrifice was consummated.

The heavy hand of the censorship fell with special weight upon us during the battle of Loos. General Macdonagh himself used the blue pencil ruthlessly, and I had no less than forty pages of manuscript deleted by his own hand from my descriptive account. Again it seemed to us that the guiding idea behind the censorship was, to conceal the truth not from the enemy, but from the nation, in defense of the British High Command and its tragic blundering. That was in September of 1915, and we became aware at that time that the man most hostile to our work was not Sir John French, the Commander-in-Chief, but Sir Douglas Haig, at that time in command of the First Corps. He drew a line around his own zone of operations beyond which we were forbidden to go, and the message which conveyed his order to us was not couched in conciliatory language. It was withdrawn under the urgent pressure of our immediate chiefs, and I was allowed to go to the Loos redoubt during the progress of the battle, with John Buchan who had come out temporarily on behalf of *The Times*.

The tragic slaughter at Loos, its reckless and useless

waste of life, its abominable staff work, and certain political intrigues at home, led to the recall of Sir John French and the succession of Sir Douglas Haig as Commander-in-Chief.

For a time we believed that our doom was sealed, knowing his strong prejudice against us, and in the first interview we had with him, he did not conceal his contempt for our job. But with his new responsibility he was bound to take notice of the increasing demand from the British government and people for more detailed accounts of British actions and of the daily routine of war. It became even an angry demand, and Sir Douglas Haig yielded to its insistence. From that time onward we were given full liberty of movement over the whole front, and full and complete privileges, never before accorded to war correspondents, to see the army reports during the progress of battle, and day by day; while Army Corps, Divisions, and Battalion headquarters were instructed to show us their intelligence and operation reports and to give us detailed information of any action on their part of the front.

The new Chief of Intelligence, General Charteris, who succeeded General Macdonagh, devoted a considerable amount of time to our little unit, and in many ways, with occasional tightening of the reins, was broad-minded in his interpretation of the censorship regulations. It may be truly said that never before in history was a great war, or any war, so accurately and fully reported day by day for at least three years, subject to certain reservations which were abominably vexatious and tended to depress the spirit of the troops and to arouse the suspicion of the nation.

The chief reservations were the ungenerous and unfair way in which the names of particular battalions were not allowed to be mentioned, and the suppression of the immense losses incurred by the troops. The last restric-

tion was necessary. It would be disastrous in the course of a battle to give information to the enemy (who read all our newspapers) of the exact damage he had done at a particular part of the line. Nothing would be more valuable to an attacking army than that knowledge. In due course the losses became known to the nation by the publication of the casualty lists, so that it was only a temporary concealment.

With regard to the mention of battalions, I am still convinced that there was needless secrecy in that respect, as nine times out of ten the German Intelligence was aware of what troops were in front of them, along all sectors. Scores of times, also, mention was made of the Canadians and Australians, where no reference was permitted to English, Scottish, Irish, or Welsh battalions, so that the English especially, who from first to last formed sixty-eight per cent of the total fighting strength, and did most fighting and most dying, in all the great battles, were ignored in favor of their comrades from overseas. To this day many people in Canada and the United States believe that the Canadians bore the brunt of all the fighting, while Tommy Atkins looked on at a safe distance. The Australians have the same simple faith about their own crowd. But splendid beyond words as these men were, it is poor old Tommy Atkins of the English counties, and Jock, his Scottish cousin, who held the main length of the line, took most of the hard knocks, and fought most actions, big and little. Anybody who denies that is a liar.

Our victory over the censorship, and over the narrow and unimaginative prejudice of elderly staff officers, was due in no small measure to—the censors. That may sound like a paradox, but it is the simple truth. I have already said that each correspondent had a censor attached to him, a kind of jailer and spy, eating, sleeping, walking, and driving. Blue pencil in hand, they read

our dispatches, slip by slip, as they were written, and our letters to our wives, our aunts, or our grandmothers. But these men happened to be gentlemen, and broad-minded men of the world, and they very quickly became our most loyal friends and active allies.

They saw the absurdity of many of the regulations laid down for their guidance in censoring our accounts, and they did their best to interpret them in a free and easy way, or to have them repealed, if there was no loop-hole of escape. Always they turned a blind eye, whenever possible, to a vexatious and niggling rule, and several of them risked their jobs, and lost them, in putting up a stiff resistance to some new and ridiculous order from G.H.Q. They went with us to the front, and shared our fatigues and our risks, and smoothed the way for us everywhere by tact and diplomacy and personal guarantees of our good sense and honor.

The first group of censors who were attached to our little organization were as good as we could have wished if we had had a free choice of the whole British Army.

Our immediate chief was a very noble and charming man. That was Colonel Stuart, a regular soldier of the old school, simple-hearted, brave as a lion, courteous and kind. He led us into many dirty places and tested our courage in front-line trenches, mine shafts, and bombarded villages, with a smiling unconcern which at least taught us to hide any fear that lurked in our hearts, as I freely confess it very often did in mine. He was killed one day by a sniper's bullet, and we mourned the loss of a very gallant gentleman.

Attached to us, under his command, was an extraordinary fellow, and splendid type, famous in the two worlds of sport and letters by name of Hesketh Prichard. Many readers will know his name as the author of *The Adventures of Don Q., Where Black Rules White,* and other books. He was a big game hunter, a great cricketer,

and an all-round sportsman, and he stood six foot four in his stockings, a long lean Irishman, with a powerful, deeply lined face, an immense nose, a whimsical mouth, and moody, restless, humorous, tragic eyes. He hated the war with a deadly loathing, because of its unceasing slaughter of that youth which he loved, his old comrades in the playing fields and his comrades' sons. Often he would come down in the morning, when the casualty lists were long, with eyes red after secret weeping. He had a morbid desire to go to dangerous places and to get under fire, because he could not bear the thought of remaining alive and whole while his pals were dying.

Often he would unwind his long legs, spring out of his chair, and say, "Gibbs, old boy, for God's sake let's go and have a prowl round Ypres, or see what's doing Dickebush way." There was always something doing in the way of high explosive shells, and once, when my friend Tomlinson and I were with Prichard in the ruin of the Grand Place in Ypres, a German aëroplane skimmed low above our heads and thought it worth while to bomb our little lonely group. Perhaps it was Hesketh's G.H.Q. arm-band which caught the eye of the German aviator. We sprawled under the cover of ruined masonry, and lay "doggo" until the bird had gone. But there was always the chance of death in every square yard of Ypres, because it was shelled ceaselessly, and that was why Hesketh went there with any companion who would join him—and his choice fell mostly on me.

He left us before the battles of the Somme, to become chief sniper of the British army. With telescopic sights, and many tricks of Red Indian warfare, he lay in front-line trenches or camouflaged trees, and waited patiently, as in the old days he had lain waiting for wild beasts, until a German sniper showed his head to take a shot at one of our men. He never showed his head twice when Hesketh Prichard was within a thousand yards.

Then Prichard organized sniping schools all along the front, until we beat the Germans at their own game in that way of warfare.

He survived the war, but not with his strength and activity. Some "bug" in the trenches had poisoned his blood, and when I saw him last he lay, a gaunt wreck, in the garden of his home near St. Albans, where his father-in-law was Earl of Verulam—Francis Bacon's old title. In a letter he had written to me was the tragic phrase, *"Quantum mutatus ab illo"*—How changed from what once he was!—and as I looked at him, I was shocked at that change. The shadow of death was on him, though his beautiful wife tried to hide it from him, and from herself, by a splendid laughing courage that masked her pity and fear. He was a victim of the war, though he lived until the peace.

Another man who was attached to the war correspondent's unit in that early part of the war was Colonel Faunthorpe, famous in India as a hunter of tigers—he had shot sixty-two in the jungle—and as a cavalry officer, pigsticker, judge, and poet. When, after the war, Faunthorpe went for a time to the British Embassy in Washington (making frequent visits to New York), American society welcomed him as the Englishman whom they had been taught to expect and had never yet seen. Here he was at last, as he is known in romance and legend—tall, handsome, inscrutable, with a monocle, a marvelous gift of silence, a quiet, deep, hardly revealed sense of humor, and a fine gallantry of manner to pretty women and ugly ones. He left a trail of tender recollection and humorous remembrance from New York to San Francisco.

Faunthorpe, behind his mask of the typical cavalry officer, had (and has), as I quickly perceived, a subtle mind, a lively sense of irony, and a most liberal outlook on life. He had a quiet contempt (not always sufficiently disguised) for the limited intelligence of G.H.Q. (or of

some high officers therein), he was open in his ridicule of journalists in general and some war correspondents in particular, and he regarded his own job in the war, as censor and controller of photographs, as one of the inexplicable jests of fate. But he stood by us manfully in a time of crisis when, at the beginning of a series of battles, a venerable old gentleman, an "ancient" of prehistoric mind, was suddenly produced from some lair in G.H.Q., and given supreme authority over military censorship, which he instantly used by canceling all the privileges we had won by so much work and struggle.

With the Colonel's full consent, we went "on strike" and said the war could go on without us, as we would not write a single word about the impending battles until all the new restrictions were removed. This ultimatum shocked G.H.Q. to its foundations—or at least the Intelligence side of it. After twenty-four hours of obstinate command, the ancient one was sent back to his lair, our privileges were restored, but Colonel Faunthorpe was made the scapegoat of our rebellion, and deposed from his position as our chief.

We deplored his departure, for he had been great and good to us. One quality of his was a check to our restlessness, nervousness, and irritability in the wear and tear of this strange life. He had an infinite reserve of patience. When there was "nothing doing" he slept, believing, as he said, in the "conservation of energy." He slept always in the long motor drives which we made in our daily routine of inquiry and observation. He slept like a babe under shell fire, unless activity of command were required, and once awakened to find high explosive shells bursting around his closed car, which he had parked in the middle of a battlefield, while his driver was painfully endeavoring to hide his body behind a mud bank. . . . Colonel Faunthorpe is now "misgoverning the unfortunate Indians"—it is his own phrase—as Com-

missioner at Lucknow, with command of life and death over millions of natives whom he understands as few men now alive.

India was well represented in the group of censors attached to our organization, for we had two other Indian officials with us—Captains Reynolds and Coldstream, both men of high education, great charm of character, and unfailing sense of humor. For Reynolds I had a personal affection as a wise, friendly, and humorous soul, with whom I tramped in many strange places where death went ravaging, always encouraged by his cool disregard of danger, his smiling contempt for any show of fear.

Coldstream was a little Pucklike man, neat as a new pin, damnably ironical of war and war correspondents, whimsical, courteous, sulky at times, like a spoiled boy, and lovable. He is back in India, like Reynolds and Faunthorpe, helping to govern our Empire, and doing it well.

Our commanding officers and censors changed from time to time. It was a difficult and dangerous position to be O. C. war correspondents, for such a man was between two fires—our own resentment (sometimes very passionate) of regulations hampering to our work, and the fright and anger of G.H.Q. if anything slipped through likely to create public criticism or to encourage the enemy, or to depress the spirit of the British people.

Colonel Hutton Wilson, who was our immediate chief for a time, was a debonair little staff officer with the narrow traditions of the Staff College and an almost childlike ignorance of the press, the public, and human life outside the boundaries of his professional experience, which was not wide. He was amiable, but irritating to most of my colleagues, with little vexatious ways. Personally I liked him, and I think he liked me, but he had a fixed idea that I was a rebel, and almost a Bolshevik.

Later in the war he was succeeded by Colonel the

Honorable Neville Lytton, the grandson of Bulwer Lytton, the great novelist, and the brother of the present Lord Lytton. Neville Lytton was, and is, a man of great and varied talent, as painter, musician, and diplomat. In appearance as well as in character he belongs to the eighteenth century, with a humorous, whimsical face, touched by side whiskers, and a most elegant way with him. He is a gentleman of the old school (with a strain of the gypsy in his blood), who believes in "form" above all things, and the *beau geste* in all situations of life or in the presence of death. When I walked with him one day up the old duckboards under shell fire, he swung his trench stick with careless grace, made comical grimaces of contempt at the bursting shells, and said, "Gibbs, if we have to die, let's do it like gentlemen! If we're afraid (as we are!) let's look extremely brave. A good pose is essential in life and war."

At the soul of him he was a Bohemian and artist. His room, wherever we were, was littered with sketches, sheets of music, poems in manuscript, photographs of his portraits of beautiful ladies. Whatever the agony of the war around us, he loved to steal away alone or with one of his assistant officers, my humorous friend Theodore Holland ("little Theo" and "Theo the Flower," as he called himself), well known as a composer, and play delightful little melodies from Bach and Gluck on an eighteenth-century flute.

In the early part of the war Lytton had served as a battalion officer in the trenches, with gallantry and distinction, and then was put in charge of a little group of French correspondents, whom he controlled with wonderful tact and good humor. He spoke French with the *argot* of Paris, and understood the French temperament and humor so perfectly that it was difficult to believe that he was not a Frenchman, when he was in the midst of his little crowd of excitable fellows who regarded him

as a *"bon garçon"* and *"un original,"* with such real affection that they were enraged when he was transferred to our command.

Another distinguished and unusual type of man—one of the greatest "intellectuals" of England, though unknown to the general public—joined us as assistant censor, halfway through the war. This was C. E. Montague, editor of *The Manchester Guardian.* At the outbreak of war he dyed his white hair black, enlisted as a "Tommy," served in the trenches, reached the rank of sergeant, and finally was blown up in a dugout. When he joined us he had taken the dye out of his hair again and it was snow-white, though he was not more than fifty years of age.

It was absurd for Montague to be censoring our dispatches, ordering our cars, looking after our mess, soothing our way with headquarter staffs, accompanying us as a silent observer to battlefields and trenches and "pill-boxes" and dugouts. He could have written any man of us "off our heads." He would have been the greatest war correspondent in the world. He writes such perfect prose that every sentence should be carved in marble or engraved on bronze. He had the eye of a hawk for small detail, and a most sensitive perception of truth and beauty lying deep below the surface of our human scene. Compared with Montague our censor—hating his job, deeply contemptuous of our work, loathing the futility of all but the fighting men, with a secret revolt in his soul against the whole bloody business of war, yet with a cold white passion of patriotism (though Irish)—we were pigmies, vulgarians, and shameless souls. His bitterness has been revealed in a book called *Disenchantment*—very cruel to us, rather unfair to me, as he admits in a letter I have, but wonderful in its truth.

There was one other man who joined our organization as one of the censors, to whom I must pay a tribute of

affection and esteem. This was a young fellow named Cadge, unknown to fame, always silent and sulky in his manner, but with a level head, a genius for doing exactly the right thing at the right time, and a secret sweetness and nobility of soul which kept our little "show" running on greased wheels and made him my good comrade in many adventures. Scores of time he and I went together into the dirty places, into the midst of the muck and ruin of war, across the fields where shells came whining, along the trenches where masses of men lived in the mud, under the menace of death.

A strange life—like a distant dream now!—but made tolerable at times, because of these men whose portraits I have sketched, and whose friendship was good to have.

XX

THE four and a half years of war were, of course, to me, as to all men who passed through that time, the most stupendous experience of life. It obliterated all other adventures, impressions, and achievements. I went into the war youthful in ideas and sentiment. I came out of it old in the knowledge of human courage and endurance and suffering by masses of men, and utterly changed, physically and mentally. Romance had given way to realism, sentiment of a weak kind to deeper knowledge and pity and emotion.

Our life as war correspondents was not to be compared for a moment in hardness and danger and discomfort to that of the fighting men in the trenches. Yet it was not easy nor soft, and it put a tremendous, and sometimes almost intolerable, strain upon our nerves and strength, especially if we were sensitive, as most of us were, to the constant sight of wounded and dying men, to the never-ending slaughter of our country's youth, to the grim horror of preparations for battle which we knew would cause another river of blood to flow, and to the desolation of that world of ruin through which we passed day by day, on the battlefields and in the rubbish heaps which had once been towns and villages.

We saw, more than most men the wide sweep of the drama of war on the Western front. The private soldier and the battalion officer saw the particular spot which he had to defend, knew in his body and soul the intimate detail of his trench, his dugout, the patch of No-Man's Land beyond his parapet, the stink and filth of his own neighborhood with death, the agony of his wounded pals.

But we saw the war in a broader vision, on all parts of the front, in its tremendous mass effects, as well as in particular places of abomination. Before battle we saw the whole organization of that great machine of slaughter. After battle we saw the fields of dead, the spate of wounded men, the swirling traffic of ambulances, the crowded hospitals, the herds of prisoners, the length and breadth of this frightful melodrama in a battle zone forty miles or more in length and twenty miles or more in depth.

The effect of such a vision, year in, year out, can hardly be calculated in psychological effect, unless a man has a mind like a sieve and a soul like a sink.

Our headquarters were halfway between the front and G.H.Q., and we were visitors of both worlds. In our château, wherever we might be—and we shifted our locality according to the drift of battle—we were secluded and remote from both these worlds. But we set out constantly to the front—every day in time of active warfare—through Ypres, if Flanders was aflame, or through Arras, if that were the focal point, or out from Amiens to Bapaume and beyond, where the Somme was the hunting ground, or up by St. Quentin to the right of the line. There was no part of the front we did not know, and not a ruined village in all the fighting zone through which we did not pass scores of times, or hundreds of times.

We trudged through the trenches, sat in dugouts with battalion officers, followed our troops in their advance over German lines, explored the enemy dugouts, talked with German prisoners as they tramped back after capture or stood in herds of misery in their "cages," walked through miles of guns, and beyond the guns, saw the whole sweep and fury of great bombardments, took our chance of harassing fire and sudden "strafes," climbed into observation posts, saw attacks and counterattacks, became familiar with the detail of the daily routine of war-

fare on the grand scale, such as, in my belief, the world will never see again.

We were visitors, also, to the other world—the world behind the lines, in G.H.Q., in Army Corps and Divisional Headquarters, in training schools and camps, and casualty clearing stations and billets in the "rest" areas, remote from the noise and filth of battle. From the private soldier standing by a slimy parapet to the Commander-in-Chief in his comfortable château, we studied all the psychological strata of the British armies in France, as few other men had the chance of doing.

But all the time we were between two worlds, and belonged to neither, and though I think our job was worth doing (and the spirit of the people would have broken if we had not done it) we felt at times (or I did) that the only honest job was to join the fighting men and die like the best of British manhood did. Our risks were not enough to make us honest when so many were being killed, though often we had the chance of death. So it seemed to me, often, then; so it seems to me, sometimes, now.

We had wonderful facilities for our work. Each man had a motor car, which gave him complete mobility. On days of battle we five drew lots as to the area we would cover, and with one of the censors, who were, as I have said, our best comrades, set out to the farthest point at which we could leave a car without having it blown to bits. Then often we walked, to get a view of the battlefield, amid the roar of our own guns, and in the litter of newly captured ground. We got as far as possible into the traffic of supporting troops, advancing guns, meeting the long straggling processions of "walking wounded," bloody and bandaged prisoners, stepping over the mangled bodies of men, watching the fury of shell fire from our own massed artillery, and the enemy's barrage fire.

Then we had to call at Corps Headquarters—our daily routine—for the latest reports, and after many hours,

motor back again to our own place to write fast and furiously. Dispatch riders took our messages (censored by the men who had been out with us that day) back to "Signals" at G.H.Q., from which they were telephoned back to the War Office in London, who transmitted them to the newspapers.

The War Office had no right of censorship, and our dispatches were untouched after they had left our quarters. Nor were our newspapers allowed to alter or suppress any word we wrote.

It may surprise many people to know that we were not in the employ of our own newspapers. The dispatches of the five men on the Western front (apart from special Canadian and Australian correspondents attached to their own Corps) were distributed by arrangement with the War Office to all countries within the Empire, under the direction of an organization known as The Newspaper Proprietors Association, who shared our expenses.

From first to last we were read, greedily and attentively by millions of readers, but I tell the painful truth when I say that many of them were suspicious of our accounts and firmly believed that we concealed much more than we told. That distrust was due, partly, to the heavy-handed censorship in the early days of the war, when our first accounts were mutilated. Afterward, when the censorship was very light so that nothing was deleted except very technical detail and, too often, the names of battalions, that early suspicion lasted.

During long spells of trench warfare, without any great battles but with steady and heavy casualties, the British public suspected that we were hiding enormous events. They could not believe that so many men could be killed unless big actions were in progress. Also, when great battles had been fought, and we had recorded many gains, in prisoners and guns, and trench positions, the lack of decisive result seemed to give the lie to our optimism.

Again, the cheerful way in which one or two of the correspondents wrote, as though a battle was a kind of glorified football match, exasperated the troops who knew their own losses, and the public who agonized over that great sum of death and mutilation.

Personally, I cannot convict myself of overcheerfulness or the minimizing of the tragic side of war, for, by temperament as well as by intellectual conviction, I wrote always with heavy stress on the suffering and tragedy of warfare, though I coerced my soul to maintain the spiritual courage of the nation and the fighting men—sometimes when my own spirit was dark with despair.

To our mess, between the two worlds, came visitors from both. It was our special pleasure to give a lift in one of our Vauxhalls to some young officer of the fighting line and bring him to our little old château or one of our billets behind the lines and help him to forget the filth and discomfort of trenches and dugouts by a good dinner in a good room. They were grateful for that, and we had many friends in the infantry, cavalry, Tank corps, machine guns, field artillery and "heavies" to whom we gave this hospitality.

When Neville Lytton became our chief, we even rose to the height of having a military band to play to our guests after dinner on certain memorable nights, and I remember a little French interpreter, himself a fine musician, who, on one of those evenings when our salon was crowded with officers tapping heel and toe to the music, raised his hands in ecstasy and said, "This is like one of the wars of the eighteenth century when slaughter did not prevent elegance and the courtesies of life."

But in the morning there was the same old routine of setting out for the stricken fields, the same old vision of mangled men streaming back from battle, prisoners huddled like tired beasts, and shell fire ravaging the enemy's line, and ours.

Army, Corps, and Divisional Generals, occasionally some tremendous man from G.H.Q., like our supreme chief, General Charteris, favored us with their company, and discussed every aspect of the war with us without reserve. Their old hostility had utterly disappeared, their old suspicion was gone, and for three years we possessed their confidence and their friendship.

In a book of mine—"Realities of War," published in the United States under the title of "Now It Can Be Told" —I have been a critic of the Staff, and have said some hard and cruel things about the blundering and inefficiency of its system. But for many of the Generals and Staff officers in their personal character I had nothing but admiration and esteem. Their courage and devotion to duty, their patriotism and honor, were beyond criticism, and they were gentlemen of the good old school, with, for the most part, a simplicity of mind and manner which doesn't, perhaps, belong to our present time. Yet I could not help thinking, as I still think, that those elderly gentlemen who had been trained in the South-African school of warfare, had been confronted with problems in another kind of war which were beyond their imagination and range of thought or experience. Even that verdict, however, which is true, I believe, of the High Command, must be modified in favor of men who created a New Army, marvelously perfect as a machine. Our artillery, our transport, our medical service, our training, were highly efficient, as the Germans themselves admitted. The machine was as good as an English-built engine, and marvelous when one takes into account its rapid and enormous growth in an untrained nation. It was in the handling of the machine that criticism finds an open field—and it's an easy game, anyhow!

Apart from Generals, staff officers, and battalion officers who came to our mess, there were other visitors,

now and then, from that remote world which had been ours before the war—the civilian world of England.

During the latter part of the war all sorts of strange people were invited out for a three-days' tour behind the lines, with a glimpse or two of the battlefields, in the belief that they would go back as propagandists for renewed effort and strength of purpose and "the will to win." A guest house was established near G.H.Q., to which were invited politicians, labor leaders, distinguished writers, bishops, and representatives of neutral countries.

In their three-days' visit they did not see very much of "the real thing," but enough to show them the wonderful spirit of the fighting men and the enormous organization required for their support, and the unbroken strength of the enemy. Now and then these visitors to the guest house came over to our mess, more interested to meet us, I think, than Generals and officers at the Base, because they could get from us, in a more intimate way, the truth about the war and its progress.

Among those apparitions from civil life, I remember, particularly, Bernard Shaw, because it was due to a freakish suggestion of mine that he had been invited out. It seemed to me that Shaw, of all men, would be useful for propaganda, if the genius of his pen were inspired by the valor and endurance of our fighting men. Anyhow, he would, I thought, tell the truth about the things he saw, with deeper perception of its meaning than any other living writer.

Bernard Shaw, in a rough suit of Irish homespun, and with his beard dank in the wet mist of Flanders, appeared suddenly to my friend Tomlinson as a ghost from the pre-war past. His first words were in the nature of a knock-out blow.

"Hullo, Tomlinson! Are all war correspondents such bloody fools as they make themselves out to be?"

The answer was in the negative, but could not avoid

an admission, like the answer yes or no to that legal trick of questioning: "Have you given up beating your wife?"

Bernard Shaw was invited, by suggestion amounting to orders from G.H.Q., to lunch with various Generals at their headquarters. I accompanied him two or three times, and could not help remarking the immense distinction of his appearance and manners in the company of those simple soldiers. Intellectually, of course, he was head and shoulders above them, and he could not resist shocking them, now and then, by his audacity of humor.

So it was when an old General who had sat somewhat silent in his presence (resentful that this "wild Irishman" should have been thrust upon his mess) enquired mildly how long he thought the war would last.

"Well, General," said Shaw, with a twinkle in his eye, "we're all anxious for an early and dishonorable peace!"

The General's cheeks were slightly empurpled, and he was silent, wondering what he could make of this treasonable utterance, but there was a loud yelp of laughter from his A.D.C.'s at the other end of the table.

Before entering the city of Arras, in which shells were falling intermittently, Shaw, whose plays and books had had a great vogue in Germany, remarked with sham pathos, "Well, if the Germans kill me to-day, they will be a most ungrateful people!"

I accompanied him on various trips he made—there was "nothing doing" on the front just then, and he did not see the real business of war—and in conversation with him was convinced of the high-souled loyalty of the man to the Allied Cause. His sense of humor was only a playful mask, and though he was a Pacifist in general principles, he realized that the only course possible after the declaration of war was to throw all the energy of the nation into the bloody struggle, which must be one of life or death to the British race.

"There is no need of censorship," he told me; "while the war lasts we must be our own censors. All one's ideas of the war are divided into two planes of thought which never meet. One plane deals with the folly and wickedness of war. The other plane is the immediate necessity of beating the Boche."

He has surprising technical knowledge of aviation, and talked with our young aviators on equal terms regarding the science of flight. He was also keenly interested in artillery work. Unfortunately his articles, written as a result of his visit, were not very successful, and the very title, "Joy-riding at the Front," offended many people who would not tolerate levity regarding a war whose black tragedy darkened all their spirit.

Sir J. M. Barrie was another brief visitant. He dined at our mess one night, intensely shy, ill-at-ease until our welcome reassured him, and painfully silent. Only one gleam of the real Barrie appeared. It was when one of my colleagues asked him to write something in the visitors' book. He thought gloomily for a moment, and then wrote: *"Beware of a dark woman with a big appetite."* The meaning of this has kept us guessing ever since.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created a great sensation along the roads of Flanders when he appeared for a few days, not because the troops recognized him as the writer of Sherlock Holmes and other favorite books, but because he looked more important than the Commander-in-Chief, and more military than a Field Marshal. He wore the uniform of a County Lieutenant, with a "brass hat," so heavy with gold lace, and epaulettes so resplendent, that even Colonels and Brigadiers saluted him as he passed.

John Masefield was more than a three-days' guest. After his beautiful book "Gallipoli," he was asked to study the Somme battlefields from which the enemy had then retreated, and to write an epic story of those tre-

mendous battles in which the New Armies had fought the enemy yard by yard, trench by trench, wood by wood, ridge by ridge, through twenty miles deep of earthworks, until, after enormous slaughter on both sides, the enemy's resistance had been broken.

Masefield arrived late on the scene, and was only able to study the ground after the line of battle had moved forward, and to get the stories of the survivors. I had had the advantage of him there, as an eyewitness of the tremendous struggle in all its phases and over all that ground. When I republished my daily narrative in book form under the title of "The Battles of the Somme," Masefield abandoned his plan, and so deprived English literature of what I am certain would have been a deathless work. All he published was an introduction, which he called "The Old Front Line," in which, with most beautiful vision, he described the geographical aspects of that ground on which the flower of our British youth fell in six weeks of ceaseless and terrible effort.

I met Masefield at that time. He was billeted at Amiens with Lytton's wild team of foreign correspondents. They were all talking French, arguing, quarreling, gesticulating, noisily and passionately, and Masefield sat silent among them, with a look of misery and long suffering.

The most important visitor from the outside world whom we had in our own mess was Lloyd George, then Minister for War. He came with Lord Reading, the Lord Chief Justice of England. Like most other visitors, they did not get very far into the zone of fire, and it would, of course, have been absurd to take Lloyd George into dangerous places where he might have lost his life. He did, however, get within reach of long-range shells, and I remember seeing him emerge from an old German dugout wearing a "tin hat" above his somewhat exuberant white locks. Some Tommies standing near remarked his

somewhat unusual appearance. "Who's that bloke?" asked one of them.

"Blimy!" said the other. "It looks like the Archbishop of Canterbury."

The visit of Lloyd George was regarded with some suspicion by the High Command. "He's up to some mischief, I'll be bound," said one of our Generals in my hearing. It was rumored that his relations with Sir Douglas Haig were not very cordial, and I was personally aware, after a breakfast meal in Downing Street, that Lloyd George had no great admiration of British Generalship. But it was amusing to see how quickly he captured them all by his geniality, quickness of wit, and nimble intelligence, and by the apparent simplicity in his babe-blue eyes. Officers who had alluded to him as "the damned little Welshman," were clicking heels and trying to get within the orbit of his conversation.

He was particularly friendly and complimentary to the war correspondents. I think he felt more at ease with us, and was, I think, genuinely appreciative of our work. Anyhow, he went out of his way to pay a particular compliment to me when, in 1917, Robert Donald of *The Daily Chronicle,* was kind enough to give a dinner in my honor. The Prime Minister attended the dinner, with General Smuts, and made a speech in which he said many generous things about my work. It was the greatest honor ever given to a Fleet-Street man, and I was glad of it, not only for my own sake, but because it was a tribute to the work of the war correspondents—handicapped as they were by many restrictions, and by general distrust.

I had an opportunity that night of saying things I wanted to say to the Prime Minister and his colleagues, and the memory of the men in the trenches, and of the wounded, gassed, and blinded men crawling down to the field hospitals, gave me courage and some gift of words.

. . . I do not regret the things I said, and their emotional effect upon the Prime Minister.

At that time, I confess, I did not see any quick or definite ending to the war. After the frightful battles in Flanders of 1917, with their colossal sum of slaughter on both sides, the enemy was still in great strength. Russia had broken, and it was inevitable that masses of German troops, liberated from that front, would be brought against us. America was still unready and untrained, though preparing mighty legions.

There was another year for the war correspondents to record day by day, with as much hope as they could muster, when in March of '18 our line was broken for a time by the tremendous weight of the last German attack, and with increasing exaltation and enormous joy when at last the tide turned and the enemy was on the run and the end was in sight.

That last year crammed into its history the whole range of human emotion, and as humble chroniclers the small body of war correspondents partook of the anguish and the exaltation of the troops who marched at last to the Rhine.

The coming of the Americans, the genius of Foch in supreme command, the immortal valor of the British and French troops, first in retreat and then in advance, the liberation of many great cities, the smashing of the German war machine, and the great surrender, make that last year of the war unforgetable in history. I have told it all in detail elsewhere. Here I am only concerned with the work of the war correspondents, and the supreme experience I had in journalistic adventure.

On the whole we may claim, I think, that our job was worth doing, and not badly done. Some of us, at least, did not spare ourselves to learn the truth and tell it as far as it lay in our vision and in our power of words. During the course of the battles it was not possible to tell

all the truth, to reveal the full measure of slaughter on our side, and we had no right of criticism. But day by day the English-speaking world was brought close in spiritual touch with their fighting men, and knew the best, if not the worst, of what was happening in the field of war, and the daily record of courage, endurance, achievement, by the youth that was being spent with such prodigal unthrifty zeal.

I verily believe that without our chronicles the spirit of the nation would not have maintained its greatness of endeavor and sacrifice. There are some who hold that to be the worst accusation against us. They charge us with having bolstered up the spirit of hatred and made a quicker and a better peace impossible. I do not plead guilty to that, for, from first to last no word of hate slipped into my narrative, and my pictures of war did not hide the agony of reality nor the price of victory.

XXI

THE coming of Peace, after four and a half years of a world in conflict, was as great a strain to the civilized mind as the outbreak of war. Indeed, I think it was more tragic in its effect upon the mentality and moral character of the peoples who had been strained to the uttermost.

The sudden relaxation left them limp, purposeless, and unstrung. A sense of the ghastly futility of the horrible massacre in Europe overwhelmed multitudes of men and women who had exerted the last vibration of spiritual energy for the sake of victory, now that all was over, and the cost was counted. The loss of the men they had loved seemed light and tolerable to the soul while the struggle continued and the spirit of sacrifice was still at fever heat, but in the coldness which settled upon the world after that fever was spent, and in homes which returned to normal ways of life, after the home-coming of the Armies, the absence of the breadwinner or the unforgotten son, was felt with a sharper and more dreadful anguish. A great sadness and spirit of disillusion overwhelmed the nations which had been victorious, even more than those defeated. What was this victory? What was its worth, with such visible tracks of ruin and death in all nations exhausted by the struggle?

As a journalist again, back to Fleet Street, in civil clothes, which felt strange after khaki and Sam Brown belts, I found that my new little assignment in life was to study the effects of the war which I had helped to

record, and to analyze the character and state of European peoples, including my own, as they had been changed by that tremendous upheaval.

Fleet Street itself had changed during the war. In spite of the severity of the censorship under the Defense of the Realm Act, and the almost slavish obedience of the press to its dictates, the newspaper proprietors had risen in social rank and power, and newspaper offices which had once been the shabby tenements of social outcasts—the inhabitants of "Grub Street"—were now strewn with coronets and the insignia of nobility. Fleet Street had not only become respectable. It had become the highway to the House of Lords.

The Harmsworth family had become ennobled to all but the highest grade in the peerage, this side of Dukedom. As chief propagandist, the man I had first met as Sir Alfred Harmsworth (when General Booth forced me to my knees and prayed for him!) was now Viscount, with his brother Harold as Lord Rothermere. He aspired to the dictatorship of England through the power of the press, and, but for one slight miscalculation, would have been dictator.

That miscalculation was the growing disbelief of the British public in anything they read in the press. The false accounts of air raids (when the public knew the truth of their own losses), such incidents as the press campaign against Kitchener, and that ridiculous over-optimism, the wildly false assurances of military writers (I was not one of them) when things were going worst in the war, had undermined the faith of the nation in the honesty of their newspapers. Nevertheless, the power of men like Northcliffe was enormous in the political sphere, and Cabinet Ministers and members of Parliament acknowledged their claims.

Burnham of *The Telegraph* was now a Viscount, but, unlike Lord Northcliffe, he supported whatever govern-

ment was in power and had no personal vendetta against politicians or policies.

Max Aitken, once a company promoter in Canada, and now proprietor of *The Daily Express,* became Lord Beaverbrook as his reward for the part he played in unseating Asquith and bringing in Lloyd George. Another peer was Lord Riddell, owner of the "News of the World," which is not generally regarded as a spiritual light in the land. As one of the most intimate friends of Lloyd George, he merited the reward of loyalty. Not only peerages, but baronetcies and knighthoods were scattered in Fleet Street and its tributaries by a Prime Minister who understood the power of the press, but, in spite of a free distribution of titles, did not possess its loyalty when the tide of public favor turned from him.

The five war correspondents on the Western front—Perry Robinson, Beach Thomas, Percival Phillips, Herbert Russell, and myself—received knighthood from the King, at the recommendation of the War Office. I had been offered that honor before the war came to an end, but it was opposed by some of the newspaper proprietors who said that if I were knighted the other men ought also to receive this title—a perfectly fair protest. I was not covetous of that knighthood, and indeed shrank from it so much that I entered into a compact with Beach Thomas to refuse it. But things had gone too far, and we could not reject the title with any decency. So one fine morning, when a military investiture was in progress, I went up to Buckingham Palace, knelt before the King in the courtyard there, with a top hat in my hand, and my knee getting cramped on a velvet cushion, while he gave me the accolade, put the insignia of the K.B.E. round my neck, fastened a star over my left side, and spoke a few generous words. I should be wholly insincere if I pretended that at that moment I did not feel the stir of the old romantic sentiment with which I had been

steeped as a boy, and a sense of pride that I had "won my spurs" in service for England's sake. Yet, as I walked home with my box of trinkets and that King's touch on my shoulder, I thought of the youth who had served England with greater gallantry, through hardship and suffering to sudden death or to the inevitable forgetfulness of a poverty-stricken peace.

That knighthood of mine deeply offended one of my friends, whose good opinion I valued more than that of most others. This man, who had been in the ugly places with me, could hardly pardon this acceptance of a title which seemed to him a betrayal of democratic faith and an allegiance to those whom he regarded as part authors of the war, traitors to the men who died, perpetrators of hate, architects of an infamous peace, and profiteers of their nation's ruin. A harsh judgment! The only difference I find that knighthood has made to my outlook on life is the knowledge of a slight increase in my tradesmen's bills.

One change in the editorial side of Fleet Street affected me in a personal way, and was a revelation of the anxiety of the Coalition Government to capture the press in its own interests. Robert Donald, under whose Directorship I had served on *The Daily Chronicle* for many years—with occasional lapses as a free lance—had been a close personal friend of Lloyd George, but toward the end of the war permitted himself some liberty of criticism—very mild in its character—against the Prime Minister. It was his undoing. Lloyd George was already under the fire of the Northcliffe press which had helped to raise him to the Premiership and now tired of him, for personal reasons by Lord Northcliffe, and he foresaw the time when, after the war, he would need all the support he could get from the press machine. A group of his friends, including Sir Henry Dalziel (afterward promoted to the peerage) and Sir Charles Sykes, a rich

manufacturer, approached the Lloyds, who owned *The Daily Chronicle,* and bought that paper and Lloyds *Weekly News* for over £1,000,000. Robert Donald found it sold over his head, without warning, and felt himself obliged to resign his editorship. Ernest Perris, the former news editor, who had managed that department with remarkable ability, reigned in his stead, and *The Daily Chronicle* became the official organ, the defender through thick and thin, fair and foul, of Lloyd George and his Coalition.

A series of dramatic telegrams reached me at the front, but I paid very little heed to them and failed to understand the inner significance of this affair. But in loyalty to Robert Donald, and by his advice, I signed a contract with *The Daily Telegraph.* It made no difference to my readers, as my articles continued to appear in *The Daily Chronicle,* as well as in *The Telegraph,* as they had done throughout the war, by arrangement of the Newspaper Proprietors Association and the War Office.

Nominally Lord Burnham was my chief instead of Robert Donald. I liked him thoroughly, as he had always been particularly kind to me, especially on a night when I was deeply humiliated by one of those social *faux pas* which hurt a man more than the guilty knowledge of a secret crime.

This was during the war, when I arrived home on leave to find a card inviting me to dine with Lord Burnham at the Garrick Club. I had often dined at the Garrick with my brother, who was a member of the club, and remembered that evening clothes had not been worn by most of the men there. Anyhow, I arrived from a country journey in an ordinary lounge suit, with rather muddy boots, owing to a downpour of rain, and then found, to my consternation, that I was the guest of a distinguished dinner party assembled in my honor. The first man to whom I was presented was Field Marshal

Sir William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial Staff, and behind him stood Admiral Lord Charles Beresford (old "Charlie B.") and a number of important people who were helping to "win the war." Lord Burnham entirely disregarded my miserable clothes, but I was damnably uncomfortable until I forgot my own insignificance in listening to the conversation of these great people who were as gloomy and pessimistic a crowd as I have ever met, and seemed to have abandoned all hope. The one exception was Sir William Robertson, who sat rather silent until at the end of the meal he said "We may be puffed, and breathing hard, but all I can say is, gentlemen, that the Germans are more exhausted."

That reminiscence, however, only leads me to the fact that after the Armistice I again transferred to *The Daily Chronicle* and remained with them until Lloyd George's policy of reprisals in Ireland filled me with a sudden passion of disgust and led to my resignation from the paper which supported it.

I think every journalist must now admit that the English press, with very few exceptions, fell to a very low moral ebb after the Armistice. The "hate" campaign was not relinquished but revived with full blast against the beaten enemy. A mountain of false illusion was built up on the basis that Germany could be made to pay for all the costs of war in all the victorious nations, and a peace of vengeance was encouraged, full of the seeds of future wars, at a time in the history of mankind when by a little spirit of generosity, a little drawing together of the world's democracies, even a little economic sanity in regard to the ruined state of Europe as a whole, civilization itself might have been lifted to a higher plane, future peace might have been secured according to the promise of "the war to end war," and at least we should have been spared the squalor, the degradation, the bitterness of the last four years. But the English press led the

chorus of "Hang the Kaiser," "Make the Germans pay," "They will cheat you yet, those Junkers!" and all the old cries of passionate folly, instead of concentrating on the defeat of militarism now that Germany was down and out, the economic reconstruction of Europe after the ruin of war, and the fulfilment of the pledges that had been made to the men who won the war. For, as we now know, and as I foretold, the German people could not pay these colossal, unimaginable sums upon which France and Great Britain reckoned, and the whole argument of these "fruits of victory" was built upon a falsity which demoralized the peoples of the allied Powers, and kept Europe in a ferment. The English press (apart from a few papers) refused to bear witness to the real truth, which was that the Peace of Versailles was impossible of fulfillment, that Europe could not recover under its economic provisions, and that the victor nations would have to face poverty, an immense burden of taxation, a stagnation of trade, the awful costs of war, with no chance of getting rich again by putting a stranglehold on the defeated peoples.

For four years following the Armistice I become a wanderer in Europe, Asia Minor, and America, as a student of the psychology and state of this after-war world, trying to see beneath the surface of social and political life to the deeper currents of thought and emotion and natural law set in motion by the enormous tragedy through which so many nations had passed.

Everywhere I saw a loosening of the old restraints of mental and moral discipline and a kind of neurotic malady which was manifested by alternate gusts of gayety and depression, a wild licentiousness in the crowded cities of Europe, a spirit of restlessness and revolt among the demobilized men, and misery, starvation, disease, and despair, beyond the glare and glitter of dancing halls, restaurants, and places of frivolity.

In France the exultation of victory, which inspired a spirit of carnival in the boulevards of Paris, crowded with visitors from all the Allied nations, did not uplift the hearts of masses of peasants and humble bourgeois folk who returned to the sites of their old homes and villages of which only a few stones or sticks or rubbish heaps remained in the fields which had been swept by the flame of war. With courage and resignation they cleared the ground of barbed wire and unexploded shells, and the unburied bodies of men, and the foul litter of a four years' battle, but they faced a bleak prospect, and behind them and around them was the vision of ruin and death. For a long time they were without water or light, stone or timber, for the work of reconstruction, or any recompense for their losses from the French Government which looked to Germany for reparations and did not get them. I talked with many of these people in their hovels and huts, marveled at their patience and courage and was saddened because so quickly after war they mistrusted the friendship of England, and the security of the peace they had gained. Their hatred to the Germans was a cold, undying fire, and beneath their hatred was the fear, already visible, that Germany hadn't been smashed enough, and that one day she would come back again for vengeance.

In Italy there was violence, bitterness, poverty, and revolt. The nation was demoralized by all the shocks that had shaken it. The microbe of Bolshevism was working in the brains of demoralized soldiers. The very walls of Rome were scrawled with Communistic cries and the name of Lenin.

In Rome I accomplished a journalistic mission which, in its way, was a unique honor and experience. This was to interview the Pope on behalf of *The Daily Chronicle* and a syndicate of American newspapers. Such a thing seemed impossible, and I knew that the chances against

me were a million to one. Yet I believed that some plain words from the Pope who, perhaps, alone among men had been above and outside all the fratricidal strife of nations, and had been abused by both sides as "Pro-German" and "Pro-Ally," would be of profound interest and importance. It was possible that he might give a spiritual call to humanity in this time of moral depression and degradation. I pressed these views upon a certain prelate who had the confidence of Benedict XV, and who was a broad-minded man in sympathy with democratic thought and customs.

He laughed at me heartily for my audacity, and said, "Out of the question! . . . Impossible!" He explained that no journalists were allowed even at the public audiences of the Pope, owing to regrettable incidents, and that my request for a private interview couldn't be considered. . . . We talked of international affairs, and presently I took my leave. "It is no use pressing for that interview?" I asked at the door. He laughed again, and said, "I will let you have a formal reply."

Three days later, to my immense surprise, I received, without any other word, a card admitting me to a private interview with H. H. Benedict XV, at three-thirty on the following afternoon.

I knew that I had to wear evening clothes, and on that hot afternoon I entirely wrecked three white ties in the endeavor to make a decent bow, and then borrowed one from a waiter. Hiring an old *carrozza,* and feeling intensely nervous at the impending interview, I drove to the Vatican. My card was a magic talisman. The Swiss Guards grounded their pikes before me, and their officer bowed toward a flight of marble steps leading to the private apartments. I was passed on from room to room, saluted by gentlemen of the Pope's bodyguard in impressive uniforms, until my knees weakened above the polished boards, my tongue clave to the roof of my

mouth, and my waiter's dress tie slipped up behind my right ear.

Finally, in a highly self-conscious state, I reached an ante-chamber where I was kept waiting for ten minutes until a chamberlain came through a little door and beckoned to me. As I passed through the doorway, I saw a tiny little man in white robes, waiting for me on the threshold.

He smiled through his spectacles, took hold of my wrist as I went down on one knee, according to etiquette, hauled me up with a firm grip, and led me to two gilt chairs, side by side. "Now we can talk," he said in French, and he sat in one chair and I in the other, in that big room where we were alone together.

In a second my nervousness left me, and we had what the Americans call a heart-to-heart talk. The Pope did not use any fine phrases. He asked me a lot of questions about the state of Europe, the feeling in England and America, and then spoke about the war and its effects. Several times he called the war "a Scourge of God," and spoke of his efforts to mitigate its misery and relieve some of its agonies. He alluded to the abuse he had received from both sides because of his neutrality and his repeated efforts on behalf of peace, and then waved that on one side and entered into a discussion on the economic effects of war. He saw no quick way of escape from ruin, no rapid means of recovery. "We must steel ourselves to poverty," he said, and alluded to the great illusion of masses of people, duped by their leaders, that, after the destruction of the world's wealth, there could be the same prosperity. He spoke sternly of the profiteers, and in a pitying way of the poverty-stricken peoples. "The rich must pay," he said. "Those who profited out of the war must pay most." His last words, after a twenty-minutes' talk, were a plea for charity and peace in the hearts of peoples.

All the time he was talking, I had in the back of my mind the doubt whether I might publish this conversation, and whether, indeed, he knew my profession and purpose. I could not leave him with that doubt, and asked him, with some trepidation, if I might publish the words he had spoken to me. He smiled, and said, "It is the purpose of this conversation."

I hurried back to my hotel, and wrote a full account, and then desired to submit it for approval to the prelate who had obtained this great consent. But he waved it on one side, and said, "You can write what you like, and publish what you like, provided it is the truth. We trust you!"

I did not abuse that trust, and my interview with the Pope was quoted in every newspaper in the English-speaking world, and created a very favorable effect.

The raid on Fiume by d'Annunzio was a passionate assertion of Imperial claims denied by the Great Powers which have made a peace regarded by Italy as a robbery of all its rightful claims, but this new manifestation of militarism was offset by the capture of factories by Communist workers and the hoisting of the Red Flag in many industrial towns. Beneath the beauty of Rome, Florence, Naples, and Venice, I saw the ugly shadow of revolution and anarchy.

I went from Trieste to Vienna, and saw worse things in a city deliberately doomed by the Allied Powers—a city of two million people which had once been the capital of a great Empire, the brilliant flower of an old civilization, and now was cut off from all its old resources of wealth and life. In slum streets and babies' crêches, and hospital wards, away from the wild vice and gayety of great hotels and dancing halls crowded with foreigners and profiteers, I saw the children of a starving city, stricken with rickets, scrofula, all kinds of hunger-diseases, and so weak that children of six or seven had no hardness

of bone, so that they couldn't stand up or sit up, and had bulbous heads above their wizened bodies. The women could not feed their babes for lack of milk. Men like skeletons in rags slouched about the streets, begging with clawlike hands. Ladies of good family could not buy underclothing or boots. Professional men, aristocrats, Ministers of State, lived on thin soup, potatoes, war bread, and the very nurses in the hospitals were starving. The Austrian kronen became worth hardly more than waste paper, and despair had settled upon this great and beautiful city.

I went on to Germany, deeply curious to know what had happened in the soul and state of this people after their tremendous struggle and their supreme defeat. I found there an immense pride of resistance to the consequence of defeat, an utter repudiation of war guilt, an intense vital energy and industry by which they hoped to recapture their lost trade and economic supremacy in Europe, a friendly feeling toward England, a deadly hatred toward France. Outwardly there was no sign of poverty or despair. There were no devastated regions, like those in France, no tidal wave of unemployment, like that in England. All the great engineering works, like those of Krupp which had provided a vast output of artillery and munitions for a world war, had adapted their machinery to the purposes of peace, and were manufacturing railway engines, agricultural machines, typewriters, kitchen utensils, everything that is made of metal, for the world's needs. It was staggering in its contrast to the lack of energy, the commercial stagnation, the idleness and debility of other war-tired peoples.

But, again, I tried to see below the surface of things, and I saw that this feverish activity was not based on sound foundations of material life, but on a rotten financial system and unhealthy laws. The workingman was underpaid and underfed, and the victim of a system of

slave labor. The professional classes were in dire poverty, and what money they earned and saved lost its value day by day, because the German Government was deliberately inflating its paper money by racing the printing presses with issues of false notes which had no reality to back them. German export trade was capturing the world's markets, but only by underselling to a rate which gave no real industrial profit. And whatever wealth Germany made, or could make, was earmarked for reparations and indemnities which, when the day of reckoning came, would make a mockery of all her efforts, reveal the great sham of her paper money, cast her into the depths of ruin, and mock at the demands of France and her Allies for the payment of those debts of war upon which they counted for their own needs and escape from ruin.

In Germany I had long talks with some of their leading politicians, bankers, and financial experts, whose figures and statements I checked by consultation with our own Ambassador and political observers. It was not without a thrill of cold emotion, and dark remembrance, that I stood for the first time in the Reichstag and saw all around me those men who had been the propagandists of hate against England, the supporters of the War Lords, the faithful servants of the Kaiser and his Chancellors, up to the last throw in their gamblers' game with fate, when all was lost. There was Scheidemann, the Social Democrat who had voted for all the war subsidies until the hour of defeat, when he voted for the new Republic. There was Stresemann, the leader of the People's Party, and an avowed Monarchist, in spite of all that had happened. There was Bernsdorff, the intriguer in America, up to his neck in conspiracy with dynamiters and Sinn Feiners and spies. These men filled me with distrust. Their new profession of good will to England had a hollow sound. Yet these, and others, spoke with the utmost frankness about Germany's condition, and for their own

reasons did not hide the desperate menace of that gamble with national finance by which they hoped to postpone the inevitable crash. I was more deeply interested in the mentality of the ordinary German folk and their way of life. A strain of pacifism seemed to be working among them, and they were sick and saddened by their loss of blood in the war, terrible in its sum of death. But the very name of France inflamed their passion. "We are all pacifists," said one man I met. "We want no more war—except one!" The humiliation of the French occupation on the Rhine, the continued insults of the French press, above all, the presence of Moroccan troops in German cities, instilled a slow poison of hate into every German mind. It made me afraid of the future. . . .

XXII

IN the spring of 1921 I lay on the deck of the steamship *Gratz,* 7,000 tons, once Austrian and now flying the Italian flag, bound from Brindisi to Constantinople. With me as a comrade was my young son.

Our fellow passengers were a strange company, mostly Jews from America, Germany, and Greece, going to sell surplus stocks, if they could, to merchants in Para. They talked interminably in terms of international exchange, dollars, pounds, marks, lire, drachmas, and kronen, and raised their hands to the God of Abraham, because of the stagnation of the world's markets. There was also a sprinkling of dark-complexioned, somber-eyed men of uncertain nationality until we came in sight of Constantinople, when they changed their bowler hats or cloth caps for the red fez of Islam. One of them was very handsome and elegant, with a distinguished but arrogant manner. I tried to get into conversation with him, but he answered coldly and in monosyllables until we passed the narrows of the Dardanelles when his eyes glowed with a sudden passion, and he told me he had fought against the British there, below the hill of Achi Baba. It had been a great victory, he said, for Turkish arms.

There were some queer women aboard, international in character, given to loud, shrill laughter and amorous ogling. One of them, a buxom creature of middle age, drank champagne at night in the smoking saloon with one of the American Jews, enormously fat, foul in conversation, free with his money, who seemed to covet her favor, and was jealous of a young Turk who, unlike

others of his race aboard, was as noisy as a schoolboy and played pranks all day long up and down the ship.

A young British officer, now "demobbed," was resuming his career as a commercial traveler in woollen vests and socks. He showed me his diary. Before the war he had made as much as £3,000 in one year, as commission on business with Turkish merchants in Constantinople, Stamboul, Smyrna. He spoke well of the Turks' commercial honesty. Their word was good. They had always paid for orders. A simple soul, this young man who had been a temporary officer in the Great War, believed that trade was reviving and that Europe would recover quickly from the effects of war.

There were others on board who did not think so. "After Austria—Germany," said the fat American Jew. Lying on the sun-baked decks I listened to conversations by these students of international business, as, for two years and more, since the war, I had been listening to the talk of men and women in Belgium, France, Italy, Austria-Germany, Canada, and the United States. It was always the same. They had no certainty of peace, no sense of security, but rather an apprehension of new conflicts in Europe and outside Europe, a fear of revolution, anarchy, and upheaval of forces beyond the control of men like themselves of international mind, business common sense. But here, on this boat, there was talk of peoples and forces not generally discussed in these other conversations to which I had listened, in wayside taverns, in railway trains, in wooden huts on the old battlefields, in the drawing-rooms of London, Paris, Rome, Vienna, Berlin, and New York.

"The Angora Turks have got to be reckoned with." . . . "Greece is out for a big gamble." . . . "The Armenians have not all been massacred." . . . "The East is seething like a cauldron." . . . "It's the oil that will put all the fat in the fire." . . . "The Bolshies have got

Batoum." . . . Mesopotamia means oil." . . . "Russia is not dead yet, and make no mistake!" . . . "My God! This peace is just a breathing space before another bloody war." . . . "It's a world gone mad." . . . "What we want is business."

Then back again to dollars, pounds, lire, marks, drachmas, kronen, roubles.

They ate enormously at meal times, and took snacks between meals. The fat American Jew at my table ate greedily, forgetting his fork sometimes, and mopping his plate with bits of bread. He bullied the stewards for bigger or tenderer helpings. He spoke Russian, German, and American with equal fluency, but an international accent. At night there was card playing, outbursts of song, gusts of laughter, popping of champagne corks, whisperings and chasings along the dark decks, a reek of cigar smoke, no silence or wonderment because of the beauty through which our boat was passing.

The Ionian Sea, merging into the Adriatic, was so calm that when our ship divided its waters, leaving behind a long furrow, the side of each wave was like a polished jewel, and reflected the patches of snow still on the mountain crests (though it was May, and hot) and the fissures in the rocks. It was unbroken by any ripple, except where the boat stirred its quietude by a long ruffle of feathers, and it was so blue that it seemed as though one's hand would be dyed, like a potter's, to the same color, if one dipped it in. With this sea, and the sky above, we went on traveling through a blue world, except where our eyes wandered into the gorges of those mountains along the coast of old Illyria, where the barren rocks are scarred and gleam white, or when they were touched by the sun's rays at dawn and sunset and glittered in a golden way, or became washed with rose water, or all drenched in mist as purple as the Imperial mantle which once fell across them. All day long the

ship was followed by a flight of sea gulls skimming on quiet wings and calling plaintively so that we heard again the sirens who cried to Ulysses as he sailed this way through the Enchanted Seas.

We steamed slowly through the Gulf of Corinth, so narrow that if any boulder had fallen from its high walls it would have smashed a hole in our ship. Small Greek boys ran along a foot path, clamoring for pennies like gutter urchins beside an English char-à-banc. Then we lay off Athens, but in spite of a special Greek *visa* from the consulate in London for which I had paid a fee, I was not allowed to land. Through my glasses I saw, with a thrill of emotion, the tall columns of the Parthenon. At our ship's side was a crowd of small craft rowed by brown-skinned boatmen who kept up a chant of *Kyrie! Kyrie!* (Lord! Lord!) like the *Kyrie eleison* (Lord have mercy!) of the Catholic Mass, touting for the custom of passengers, as they did three thousand years ago, with those same shouts and waving of brown arms, and curses to each other, and raising of oars, when ships came in from Crete and Mediterranean ports with merchandise and travelers.

So we passed into the Ægean Sea, and saw on our port side, like low-lying clouds, the Greek islands in which the Gods once dwelt, and the old heroes. We drew close to Gallipoli, and I thought of heroes more modern, lying there in graves that were not old, who had done deeds needing more courage than that of Ulysses and his men, and who had faced monsters of human machine guns more dreadful than dragons and many-headed dogs, and the Medusa head. The trenches were plainly visible—British and Turkish—and the old gun-emplacements, and the Lone Tree, and the barren slopes of Achi Baba where the flower of Australian and New Zealand youth had fallen, and many Irish and English boys.

"Quite a good landing place," said one of the pas-

sengers by my side. I looked at him, suspecting irony, and remembering the landing of the Twenty-Ninth Division, and the Australian troops, under destroying fire. But this elderly Jew said again, in a cheerful way, "A nice cove for a boat to land."

We went on slowly through the narrow channel, until in the morning sunlight we saw the glory of the Golden Horn and the minarets of Constantinople. It was then that half the passengers put on the red fez of Islam, and paced the deck restlessly, with their eyes strained toward the city of the Sultan.

The fat American Jew touched me on the arm and spoke solemnly, with a kind of warning. "For those who don't wear a fez Constantinople won't be a safe place, I guess. They say there are bodies floating every morning at the Golden Horn—stabbed in the back. I'm keeping close to Pera."

The first view of the Golden Horn was as beautiful as I had hoped, more than I had imagined, as we rounded the old Seraglio Point and saw in the early sunlight of a May morning the glittering panorama of Constantinople.

The domes of San Sophia lay like rose-colored clouds above the cypress trees. Beyond was the great mosque of Suleyman, its minarets, white and slender, cutting the blue sky like lances. Further back, rising above a huddle of brown old houses, was the mosque of Mohammad, the conqueror who, five hundred years ago, rode into San Sophia on a day of victory, over the corpses there, and left the imprint of a bloody hand on one of the pillars where it is now sculptured in marble. White in the sun on the water's edge were the long walls of the Sultan's palace. One could see Galata, and the old bridge which crosses from Stamboul, and above, on the hill, Pera, with its Grand' Rue, its night clubs, its cabarets, its Christian churches, and haunts of vice.

Before we anchored, our ship was surrounded by a

swarm of boats, as at Athens, but these were the narrow caïques of the Golden Horn, rowed by Turks, who hung on by thrusting grapnel hooks through our portholes and by clinging on to ropes. They were old sun-baked Turks, with white beards, and young Turks with only down on their faces and roving eyes for the unveiled women on our decks, and together they raised a wild chant as they called "Effendi! Effendi!" and invited us to go ashore. Other ships passed us—a steamer crowded with Russian refugees fleeing from the Bolshevik pursuit of Wrangel, a British destroyer, sailing boats with leg-o'-mutton sails, billowing white above the blue water, and many of the little *caïques* where, on Turkish rugs, sat Turkish ladies like bundles of black silk, deeply veiled, so that one had no glimpse of a face.

My young son and I, with light baggage, secured a *caïque* with the fat American Jew, who had enormous cases of samples which nearly sank the boat when they were dumped in by the Turkish porters. We were rowed across the Golden Horn to the Customs office by two Kurdish boatmen, and there were seized upon by a crowd of Turks who fought each other for our baggage. In the customs office the Turkish officials were highly arrogant young men in uniform, who smoked innumerable cigarettes and refused to pass the American's samples of boots and shoes until he had bribed them with some of his very best pairs. After that long delay we took a carriage and two horses and drove at a smart trot to the Pera Palace Hotel where I found my comrade of the war, Percival Phillips, and a bevy of English and American correspondents watching the secret progress of a drama which might result in another European war and set the whole East aflame. It was Phillips, as well as the High Commissioner, Admiral Webber, and various Intelligence officers, who "put me wise," as the Americans say, to the

situation which had its secret plot in Constantinople, but its fighting center in Angora. Here in "Constant" there was a mask of peaceful obedience to the decrees of the International Occupation. It was called "International," and there were French and Italian troops and police on both side of the Galata Bridge, but the real command was in the hands of the British High Commissioner and the real power in the hands of the British fleet. The French were "huffy" because of that, and General Franchet de l'Esperay had left in a temper because he would not take orders from the British, and was up to his eyes in political intrigue. The Sultan was a puppet in the hands of the British, ready to sign any document they put before him, provided his personal safety was assured. But every Turk in his palace, and in the back streets of Galata and Stamboul, were rebels against his submission, and spies and agents on behalf of the Nationalist Turks in Angora. Those were the real fellows. They refused to recognize the Allied terms of peace, or any peace. They were contemptuous of the Sultan's enforced decrees. They even denied his religious authority. They had raised the old flag of Islam and were stirring up fanaticism through the whole Mohammadan world as far as India. But they were modern in their ideas and methods, "Nationalist" and not religious in their faith, like the Irish Sinn Feiners who put national liberty before Catholic dogma. They were raising levies of Turkish peasants, drilling them, arming them (with French weapons!), teaching them that if they wanted to keep their land they must fight for it. There was a fellow named Mustapha Kemal. He would be heard of later in history as a great leader. He was raiding up the coast as far as Ismid, and little companies of British Tommies had had to fall back before his irregulars. Not good for our prestige! But what could we do on the Asiatic side, with only a few battalions of boys? Mean-

while, the Turks in Constantinople were sending money, men and munitions to the Nationalists, and there was precious little we could do to stop them, in spite of our troops and police. Why, there was gun-running under the Galata Bridge, almost as open as daylight! Mustapha Kemal's strength was growing—nobody knew how strong. Perhaps it was underestimated. Perhaps one day the Greeks, holding a long line across Asia Minor for the protection of Smyrna, would get a nasty surprise. Who could trust a Greek Army, anyhow? And what was the British Government—that beggar Lloyd George!—doing with all their pro-Greek policy? It was doing us no good in the Mohammadan world. Even India was getting restless because their political agitators were pretending the Sultan was a prisoner and the Prophet insulted! Not that the Indian Mohammadans cared a curse about the Sultan really, belonging to a different sect. But it was all propaganda, and dangerous. The whole situation was full of danger, and Constantinople was a very interesting city in this time of history.

That was the gist of the conversation I heard from Phillips, and British Intelligence officers, and naval lieutenants, and travelers from the Near or Far East, in the smoking room of the Pera Hotel, which looked out to the Grand' Rue with its ceaseless procession of Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Israelites, French and Italian officers, Persians, Arabs, Negroes, Gypsies, American "drummers," British soldiers, and Russian refugees—the queerest High Street in the world, the meeting place between the East and the West, the unsafe sanctuary of those in flight from the greatest tragedy in the world, which was in Russia.

For one scene in this drama the dining room of the Pera Palace Hotel—a thieves' kitchen in the way of fleecing the visitor—was an entertaining prologue. Rich Turks came here to listen to incautious conversations by

foreign journalists, or irresponsible young middies from the British fleet lying in the Bosphorus, or to act as liaison officers between Mustapha Kemal and his political supporters in the sacred city. There was one Turkish family who dined here every day, the women unveiled as a sign of their modernism, and one of them so beautiful with her dark liquid eyes touched by kohl, that she had to sustain the gaze of young Christian dogs in naval uniform—and did not seem to mind. Greek and Armenian merchants brought their ladies here, dressed in Paris fashions by way of the Grand' Rue de Pera, and light in their way of behavior, despite the glowering eyes of old Turks who watched them sullenly. Cossack officers who had lost their command, and all but their pride, came in full uniform, with black tunics crossed by cartridge belts, high, black boots, and astrachan caps. One of them was a giant with a close-cropped head like a Prussian officer, and a powerful, brutal face, but elegant drawing-room manners, as when he bent over the hands of lady friends and kissed their rings. These last fugitives from the last expedition against Bolshevik Russia lived gayly for a time on the diamonds they had hidden in their boots. Their motto was the old one: "Let's eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die!" They gave banquets to each other while they had any means of paying the bill. That was easy while they had a few jewels, for in a private room at the Pera Palace were Jew dealers who would value a diamond ring with expert knowledge and pay in Turkish pounds. One general paid for his dinner party in a different way. At the end of the meal he took his wife's fur tippet from her shoulders, handed it to the waiter, and said, "Bring me the change!"

Their own paper money was almost worthless in purchasing value, whether Czarist roubles, or Denikin roubles, or Soviet roubles. One of the Cossack officers

ordered a cocktail, and paid 100,000 roubles for the little nip of stimulant.

Once or twice a week there was a dance after dinner at this hotel patronized by the younger officers of the British and American fleets and the society of Pera. Some of the women there were beautiful, though mostly too plump, which is the way of Greek ladies and Armenian, after a certain age. Their shoulders rose above their low-cut dresses. Young naval lieutenants winked at each other, sometimes danced with each other and said, "Hot stuff, dear child! Beware!"

In such a place, at such a time, there was no sense of the East, near or far, no reminder of the tragedies within a stone's throw of the windows, no reminder of great menace creeping across the clock of Time to this city and its mixed inhabitants, no fear of massacre. Yet, when I went outside that hotel, by day, and often by night, I was aware of those things, smelt something evil here, beyond the noxious stench of the narrow streets. The Turks who slouched up the Grand' Rue, or crowded the bazaars of Stamboul and Galata, had no love for the Christian inhabitants, civil or military. I saw them spit now and then, when British Tommies passed giving the glad eye to young Turkish women who let down their veils like window blinds hurriedly drawn.

Often I went down to the Galata Bridge with my young son, glancing often over my shoulder when there was any crush, because I did not want his young life ended by a stab in the back which happened sometimes, I was told, to soldier boys of ours. Beyond that bridge, where two Turks stood receiving toll from all who passed, was the beginning of the East, stretching away and away to that great swarming East which was held back from Europe by a few battleships, a few British regiments, and the last prestige of the European peoples, weakened by its internecine warfare. Could we hold back

the East forever, or even the Turkish nationalists from this city on the Bosphorus? Across the bridge came Turkish porters carrying great loads at the nape of the neck, Persians in high fur caps, Kurds, Lazis, Arabs, Soudanese, negroes, Gypsy queens in tattered robes, smart young Turks in black coats and the red fez, Turkish women in blue silk gowns, deeply veiled. In the bazaars near by there were swarms of Turks, Armenians, and Jews, selling German and American goods, Oriental spices, Turkish and Persian carpets, dried fruits, shell oil. Around the mosques of Stamboul sat groups of Turks smoking their narghili and talking, between the hours when they washed their feet according to the law of the Prophet. Camel caravans, with mangy, tired beasts, heavily laden, plodded down narrow streets, and their drivers had news to tell, exciting to little groups of Turks who gathered round. What news? What excitement? . . . There were hidden emotions, passions, secrets, among these people, at which I could only guess, or fail to guess.

I thought of a story I had heard of the Reverend Mother in a Catholic convent here in Constantinople. She had a Turkish porter at the convent gate, an old man who had been a faithful servant. She asked him if he thought there would be any rising in the city among the Turks, and, if so, whether her convent school would be respected. "Do not be afraid," he said. "When the massacre begins I myself will kill you without any pain." He promised her an easy death.

There was, I thought, only one safeguard against massacre in this city seething with racial hatred. It was the fear of those young British soldiers, with their French comrades, and sailor cousins, who kept order in Constantinople. It was a fear inspired mainly by British prestige. We had no great strength at that time, as far as I could see, less than two full Divisions of infantry—

mostly boys who had been too young to fight in the Great War—and some Indian cavalry, Mohammadans like the Turks. In the Bosphorus, it was true, there was a considerable fleet, led by the Iron Duke, and some American warships, but a rising in Constantinople, an attack on the European quarters, would lead to dirty work. There would be many Christian throats cut.

The British troops did not seem nervous. They are never nervous, but take things as they come. At the upper end of the Rue de Pera there were numbers of wine shops and dancing halls where they gathered in the evenings. As I passed them I saw groups like those with which I had been familiar in the estaminets on the Western front. They were singing the same old songs. Through the swing doors came gusts of laughter and those choruses roared by lusty voices. In Constantinople as in Flanders! The Y.M.C.A. was doing good work in keeping them out of temptation's way, down back alleys, where Greek girls waited for them, or where Turkish ladies hid in the dark courtyards. On the whole they gave no great trouble to the "red caps" who rounded them up at night. The American Jacks gave more. Coming from "dry" ships, they drew a bee line for the booze shops, and were mad drunk rapidly. The British A.P.M. with whom I went round the city one night, had the genial permission from the American Admiral to have them knocked on the head by the naval police as quickly and smartly as possible. It was safer for them.

I shall never forget one of those young American sailors whom I encountered at a music hall close to the Pera Palace, known as the "Petits Champs." A variety show was given there nightly, by Russian singers and dancers with a Russian orchestra, and it was crowded with all the races of the world which met in Constantinople. Some of the dancing girls had been ladies of

quality in Russia. Now they showed their bodies to this assembly of wine-drinking men and evil women, of East and West, for the wages of life. The orchestra played Russian music with a wild lilt in it—the rhythm of the primitive soul of the old Slav race. It worked madness in the brain of the young American Jack, who sat next to me, with one of his petty officers. He was a nice, sweet-faced fellow, but with too much beer in him to withstand this music. For a time he contented himself with dangling his watch in his glass of beer, but presently his body swayed to the rhythm, and he waved his handkerchief to the ladies on the stage. Then he seized a great tin tray from a passing waiter and danced the hula-hula with it, with frightful crashes and bangs. No one took much notice of him. The petty officer smiled, as at a pleasant jest. Our own sailors were merry and bright, and there was a great noise in the cabaret of the Petits Champs.

There was no noise, but a kind of warm silence, if such a thing may be, in a Turkish house on the hillside overlooking the Bosphorus, where my son and I took dinner with a young English merchant and his wife. It was an old wooden house called a "palace," with a broad balcony above a little tangled garden. Down there among the trees with a little old mosque with one minaret, and far below the British fleet lay at anchor, mirrored in the glasslike water. The spearheads of black cypress trees in our garden pointed to the first stars of evening in a turquoise sky, faintly flushed by the rose tints of sunset. Beyond, the Asiatic shore stretched away, with the lights of Scutari clustered at the water's edge below the slopes of Bulgaria, and clear-cut against the sky rose the tall white minarets of Buyak Djami, the great mosque built in honor of Mirimah, the daughter of Suleyman the Magnificent. A band was playing on one of our warships, and its music came faintly up to us.

When it ceased, there was a great silence around us, except for the flutter of bats skimming along our balcony.

The young English merchant—the head of the greatest trading house in the Near East—sat back in a cane chair, talking somberly of the stagnation of his business owing to the effects of war and the failure of peace. He was anxious about the Nationalists in Angora. That fellow Mustapha Kemal—The Greeks might not have the strength to hold Smyrna! Every Turk had vowed to get back Smyrna at all costs. It was the worst wound to their pride. The future was very uncertain. Damned bad for trade. What was going to happen in Europe with all these race hatreds, political intrigues, jealousies between French and British, Italian and French, Greeks and all others. Venizelos had claimed too much. More than Greece could hold. . . .

He was newly married, this young merchant of the Near East, and his wife was beautiful and restless, and rather bored. She liked dancing better than anything in the world, and had enjoyed it on the Iron Duke with young British officers. Her merchant husband was not keen on it—especially when his wife danced with those young naval officers, I thought. He was a little annoyed now when she brought a gramaphone on to the balcony and set it going to a dance tune and offered her arms to a boy who had brought the latest steps from London —my son. While they moved about to the rhythm of a rag-time melody, the young merchant continued his analysis of a situation ugly with many perils and troubles, and then was silent over his pipe. From the garden came another kind of music as the rose flush faded from the sky and the cypress trees were blacker against a paler blue. A white-robed figure stood in the little turret of the minaret and turned eastward and raised his voice in a long-drawn chant, rising and falling in the Oriental scale of half-tones. It was the imam, calling to the Faithful

of the Prophet in the city of Mohammad. It was the voice of the East as it has called through the centuries to desert and city and camel tracks, to the soul of Eastern peoples under this sky and stars. It rose above the music of a gramaphone playing rag-time melody, and called across the waters of the Bosphorus where Western battleships were lying, with their long guns, like insects with their legs outstretched, as we looked down on them. Faintly from the shadow world, and through this warm-scented air of an evening in Constantinople, came answering voices, wailing, as the imams in each minaret of the city of mosques, gave praise to God, and to Mohammad his Prophet.

"The Turks aren't finished yet," said the young English merchant. "And behind the Turk is Russia—and the East."

A chill made me shiver a little. . . . The sun had gone down.

With Percival Phillips, sometimes, we visited the mosques and explored Turkish street life on the Stamboul side of Constantinople, and went up to Eyoub and the Sweet Waters of Europe, and wandered among the charred ruins of a quarter of the city where a great fire had raged. Once, with the young commercial traveler in vests and pants—three years before an officer in the Great War—we walked to lonely districts where the Indian cavalry had pitched their camps beyond the city and when in a little Turkish coffee shop, remote and solitary, some wild Gypsy women in tattered robes of many colors, through which could be seen their bare brown limbs, danced and sang. No need to ask the origin of the Gypsy folk after seeing these. They were people of the Far East, and their songs had the harsh and ancient melody of Oriental nomads.

"Not particularly safe to wander far afield like this," said the young commercial traveler. He told stories of

Turkish robbers and assassins in the outskirts of the city. But no harm befell us.

In narrow streets off the Grand' Rue de Pera, we came into touch with another aspect of life in Constantinople—the heart of the Russian tragedy among the Royalist refugees. Those people had arrived in successive waves of flight following the defeat and rout of the "White" expedition under Denikin, Wrangel, and others. The luckiest among them, who had jewels to sell and a business instinct, had set up little restaurants and wine shops in Pera. Somehow or other many of them were able to get enough money to eat and drink in these places, and they were always filled with Russian officers in uniform, with their ladies. Those who served were often of higher rank than those who dined, and a score of times I saw an officer rise, bow profoundly, and kiss the hand of the waiting girl before he ordered his *bortsch*. Probably she was a Princess. One could hardly order a cup of tea in Constantinople without receiving it from a Russian princess or at least a lady of quality in the old régime. I had a pork chop handed to me by a bald-headed man with an apron round his waist whom I knew afterward as the Admiral of the late Czar's yacht. His fellow serving men were aristocrats and intellectuals, wearing white linen jackets and doing their job as waiters with dignity as well as skill. Poor devils! In spite of their courage and their gayety, they were having a rough life in Constantinople with no hope ahead, except the fading dreams that Soviet Russia would be overthrown by some internal plot or foreign intervention. In spite of all the millions lent to Russia by Great Britain, and all the arms and ammunition supplied by us to Koltchak, Denikin, and all the "White" Armies, they regarded England as the chief cause of their repeated failures, and as a nation which had not helped their cause with proper loyalty. It was the one-time Admiral of the Czar's yacht who

made this complaint to me, and said, "England has betrayed us!"

That evening I sat with a young British naval officer in the Pera Palace hotel and heard the other side of the story. He had been looking angrily at some Cossack officers and their ladies, laughing over their coffee cups.

"I'm not bloodthirsty," he said, "but it would give me the greatest pleasure in the world to cut one of those fellow's throats."

He told me the cause of his bitterness—the inefficiency, the corruption, the vanity, the damned selfishness, the jealousy of those White officers. We had sent out vast stores of arms and ammunition, but they never got to the front. Crowds of these fellows, swaggering about in uniform, never went near their wretched men in the trenches, and were hundreds of miles behind, gambling, drinking, indulging in amorous adventure. The women were just as bad, many of them. Worse, if anything! We had sent out consignments of clothes for the Russian nurses, who were in rags at the front where they were looking after the wounded. That underclothing, those stockings, and boots, and raincoats never reached the nurses. They had been seized and worn by the female harpies hundred of miles behind the line. He had more respect for the Reds than for this White rabble. One day the British taxpayer would want to know why we were keeping thousands of them in the island of Prinkipo and elsewhere. . . .

I went out to Prinkipo, and did not feel the bitterness of that young officer who had no patience with our charity. A boatload of refugees, with a crowd of women and children, had just arrived and were sitting among their bundles and boxes on the quayside, forlorn, melancholy, sick after a long voyage across the Black Sea, and after the horror of flight from the Red Terror. We could not let them starve to death without a helping hand.

Certainly we were doing them rather well on Prinkipo, and it seemed to me an island of delight where I, for one, would gladly have stayed a month or two, or a year or two, if my own folk had been there. These Russian exiles made the best of it. Their laughter rang out in a wooden restaurant where a party of them dined to the music of a little orchestra which played mad and merry music. Some of those Russian girls were amazingly beautiful, patrician in manner and grace.

Along a road leading through green woods to a golden shore lapped by little frothing waves, came a cavalcade of Russians on donkeys, which they raced with each other, screaming with laughter. Further on, where the woods ended, there was a smooth greensward on which a crowd of Russian folk were dancing to the music of a hurdy-gurdy. Hand in hand young Russian men and women, once great people in Moscow and Odessa, wandered playing the pleasant game of love-in-idleness. Not too bad to be a refugee at Prinkipo, until they awakened from their lotus eating to the hopelessness of their state, to the raggedness of their clothes, to their life without purpose and prospect, and, later on, to a new menace of death from bloodthirsty Turks in alliance with Red Russia. There would not be much good will to Russian Royalists living here on Prinkipo in the wooden villas and palaces built by Turkish pashas for their summer pleasure.

When the last wave of flight came, after Wrangel's downfall, Prinkipo became overcrowded and fever-stricken, and the Russians in Constantinople, tens of thousands of poverty-stricken folk of peasant class, would have starved to death but for the charity of British and American relief work. They were panic-stricken as well as poverty-stricken, after the burning of Smyrna.

So in Constantinople I saw the drama of a city in which

the East met the West—across the Galata Bridge—and where the strife and agony of many races upheaved by war and revolution, seethed as in a human cauldron. In this city of the Mohammadan world, and of Russia in exile, and of French, German, Italian, and Greek intrigue, the peace of the world did not seem secure and lasting. It filled me with sinister forebodings.

XXIII

IT was a British ship which took me from Constantinople to Smyrna, and it gave me a thrill of patriotic pleasure to get porridge for breakfast, and ham and eggs with buttered toast.

Apart from the officers and crew, there were few English folk aboard. I can only remember one—a good-looking and good-humored major, who was bound for Alexandria in company with a pretty Greek woman who seemed to be under his chivalrous protection. The other first-class passengers were Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. On the lower deck were groups of Italian soldiers who sang and danced continuously, a few Turks, an old Arab woman in a dirty white robe, who gazed all day long over the side of the ship as though reading some spell of fate in the lace work patterns of froth woven by our passage through the dead calm sea, and families of Israelites lying among their bundles.

It was good to lie on the boat deck in the direct glare of the sun, pouring its warmth down from a cloudless sky, and to watch with half-shut eyes the golden glitter of the sea and its change of color and light from deepest blue to palest green, as the currents crossed our track and white clouds passed overhead and the sun sank low, as evening came. Fairy islands, dreamlike and unsubstantial, appeared on the far horizon, and then seemed to sink below its golden bar. At night the sky was crowded with stars, shining with a piercing brightness, and it seemed no wonder then that to each of them the Greeks had given a name and godlike attributes. They seemed closer to the world than in an English sky,

heaven's brilliant train, and on this ship in a lonely sea—no other boat passed us—the company of the stars was friendly and benign.

From the lower deck came the singing of the Italian soldiers, with their liquid words and open notes, in which I heard something very old in the melody of life. The Greeks were singing, too, in a separate group, softly, to themselves, and with a melancholy cadence. Tiny sparks of fire, like glow-worms, flitted to and fro on the lower deck. It was the glow of cigarette ends, as the Italian soldiers danced the fox trot and the one step. Now and then a match was lighted, and one saw it held in the hollow of brown hands, illumining a dark Italian face.

My son and I sat on coils of rope, up on the boat deck, with a Greek girl with whom we had made friends. She talked and talked, and held us spellbound by her philosophy of life, her gayety, her bitter wisdom, her fearlessness and wit. It was a short voyage, and we have never seen her again, but we shall not forget that laughing Greek girl who spoke half the languages of Europe, and English perfectly, and American with such intimate acquaintance that she could sing little old nigger songs with perfect accent, as it seemed to us. Yet she had never been in England or America, and had spent nearly all her life in Constantinople, with brief visits to Greece, and two frightful years in Russia. She had learnt English, and her negro songs, in the American College at Constantinople, to which she looked back with adoration, though she had been a naughty rebel against all its discipline.

As a governess to a German family in Russia, she had learnt another language—besides Russian, Greek, French, Turkish and English—and had been thoroughly amused with life, until the Red Revolution broke in Moscow. Her Germans fled, leaving her alone in their empty flat, and then she learnt more than ever she had guessed about

the cruelties of life. Her life was saved by her gayety and "cheek," as she called it. When a crowd of Red soldiers threatened to slit her throat, she jeered at them, and then made them roar with laughter by playing comic songs on the piano and singing them with merry pantomime. That was all right, but she starved and went in expectation of death month after month. Her Russian friends, students and intellectuals, were mostly shot or hanged. She recognized some of them as they hung from lamp-posts in the streets, and gave us a vivid imitation of how they looked, with their necks cricked and their tongues hanging out. She became used to that sort of thing. . . . After wandering adventures, abominable hardships, in dirt and rags, she got through at last to Constantinople, and lived for a time on a Greek gunboat, as one of the crew, wearing one of their caps and a sailor's jersey. They saved her from starving to death, until she was able to get in touch with her family. Now she was going to Alexandria, as a typist in an English office.

She was tremendously amused with all this experience. She wouldn't have missed it for the world. It was the adventure of life, and the great game. There was nothing in life but that—and what did death matter after this adventure whenever it came! We spoke of war, and the chance of world peace, and she scoffed at the chance. War was inevitable—the greatest adventure of all. Cruelty?—Yes, that was part of the adventure. Men were heartless, but amusing, even in their cruelties. It was no good looking at life seriously, breaking one's heart over impossible ideals. It was best to laugh and take things as they came, and shrug one's shoulders, whatever happened. It was Life! . . . So we talked under the stars.

There was another girl on board who talked to us. She belonged to a different type and race—a tragic type,

and Armenian. She had some frightful photographs in a satchel which she wore always round her waist. They were photographs of Turkish atrocities in Asia Minor. There was one of a Turkish officer sitting on a pile of skulls and smoking a cigarette. Those skulls had once held the living brains of this girl's family and townsfolk at Samsun. She told me of the death march of the Armenians when the Turks drove them from the coast into the interior. The women and children had been separated from their men folk, who were then massacred. Her father and brother had been killed like that. They passed their bodies on the roadsides. The women and children had been driven forward until many dropped and died, until all were barefoot and exhausted to the point of death. Kurdish brigands had robbed them of the little money they had, and their rings. Some of the younger girls were carried off. Their screams were heard for a long way. There were not many who reached the journey's end. . . . A terrible tale, told with a white passion of hate against the Turk, but without tears, and coldly, so that it made me shiver.

In that ship, sailing under the stars in the Ægean Sea, I learnt more than I had known about the infernal history of mankind during war and revolution. I had seen it in the West. These were stories of the East, unknown and unrecorded, as primitive in their horror as when Assyrians fought Egyptians, or the Israelites were put to the sword in the time of Judas Maccabæus.

Our ship put in at Mitylene, and with the Greek girl we explored the port and walked up the hillside to an old fort built by the Venetians in the great days when Venice was the strongest sea power in that part of the world. On the way, the Greek girl chatted to shopkeepers and peasants in their own tongue, and hers, and then climbed to the top of the fort, sitting fearlessly on the edge of the wall and looking back to the sea over which we had

traveled, and down to our ship, so small as we saw it from this height.

In the valley, Greek peasants of better type and stock than those at Athens, and true descendants of the people whose tools and gods and jewels they turn up sometimes with their spades, were leading their sheep and goats. Some of them were singing and the sound rose clear up the hillside with a tinkling of goat bells and the baaing of the sheep. Wild flowers were growing in the old walls of the fort, and the hillside was silvered with daisies. We seemed very close to the blue canopy of the sky above us, as we sat on the edge of the wall, and in the warm sunshine, and above that calm, crystal-clear sea, mirroring our ship, we seemed to be touched by the immortality of the gods, and to be invested with the beauty of the springtime of the world.

"It would be good to stay here," said the Greek girl. "We could keep goats and sing old Greek songs."

However, presently she was hungry, and scrambled off the wall and said, "The ship—and supper!"

So we went down to the little port again and rowed away from Mitylene to the ship which was sounding its siren for our return.

We reached Smyrna next morning, and I, for one, was astonished by the modern aspect of its sea frontage, upon which the sun poured down. Beyond the broad quays it swept round the gulf in a wide curve of white houses, faced with marble and very handsome along the side inhabited, I was told, by rich Armenian merchants.

"The Turks will never rest till they get Smyrna back," said the English major by my side, and his words came as a sharp reminder of the lines away beyond the hills, where a Greek army lay entrenched against the Turkish nationalists and Mustapha Kemal. But no shadow of doom crept through the sunlight that lay glittering upon those white-fronted houses, nor did I guess that one day,

not far ahead, Englishmen, like myself, looking over the side of this ship, would see the beauty of that city devoured by an infernal fury of flame, and listen to the screams of panic-stricken crowds on those broad quaysides, hidden behind rolling clouds of smoke. . . .

When we landed, in the harbor-master's pinnace, we found that we had come on a day of festival among the Greek army of occupation and the Greek inhabitants of Smyrna. All the ships in the harbor—among them the very gunboat in which our Greek lady had lived as one of the crew—were dressed in bunting, and flags were flying from many buildings. Greek officers, very dandified, in much decorated uniforms, with highly polished boots, drove along the esplanade in open carriages, carrying great bouquets, on their way to a review by the Commander-in-Chief outside the city. Smyrniote girls, Greek and Armenian, were in fancy frocks and high-heeled shoes tripping gayly along with young Greek soldiers. Bands were playing as they marched, and all the air thrilled with the music of trumpets and military pomp. Few Turks were visible among those Christian inhabitants. They were mostly dockside laborers and porters, wearing the red fez of Islam.

It was the English major who told me of the horror that had happened here when the Greeks first landed. They had rowed off from their transports in boats, and a crowd of these Turkish porters had helped to draw the boats up to the quayside. All the Christian population was on the front, waving handkerchiefs from windows and balconies. Ladies of the American Red Cross were looking at the scene from the balcony of the Grand Hotel Splendid Palace—what a name! There was no sign of hostility from the Turks, but suddenly the Greek soldiers seemed to go mad, and started bayoneting the Turks who had helped them to land. In view of all the women and children who had assembled to greet them

with delirious joy, they murdered those defenseless men and flung their bodies into the sea. It was a crime for which many poor innocents were to pay when the Turkish irregulars came into Smyrna with the madness of victory after the destruction of the Greek army by Mustapha Kemal and his Nationalist troops. Well, that grim secret of fate lay hidden in the future when Tony and I booked rooms at the Grand Hotel Splendid Palace and entertained our little Greek lady to breakfast, and then at midday waved towels out of the bedroom window in answer to her signals from the ship which took her on her way to Alexandria and another adventure of life. The English major brought a bucket to the upper deck, as we could see distinctly and wrung a towel over it as a sign of tears. We made the countersign. . . .

The sea front of Smyrna, with its modern marble-fronted houses, masked an older and more romantic city, as we found in many walks in all its quarters. It masked the Turkish squalor of little streets of wooden shops and booths where crowds of Turkish women, more closely veiled than those in Constantinople, bargained for silks and slippers and household goods. In the old markets at the end of Frank Street, now a heap of cindered ruins, we sauntered through the narrow passages with vaulted roofs where old Turks sat cross-legged in their alcoves, selling carpets from Ouchak and Angora, dried raisins and vegetables, strips of colored silk for Turkish dresses, Sofrali linen, Manissa cotton, German-made hardware, and all manner of rubbish from the East and West, drenched in the aroma of spices, moist sugar, oil, and camels.

I was anxious, as a journalist, to get the latest information about the military situation away to the back of Smyrna, and for that purpose called upon the British Military Mission, represented by a General Hamilton and his staff. A charming and courteous man, he was

obviously embarrassed by my visit, not knowing how much to tell me of a situation which was extremely delicate in a political as well as a military way. He decided to tell me nothing, and I did not press him, seeing his trouble.

I obtained all the information I wanted, and even more than I bargained for, from the Greek authorities. The fact that I represented *The Daily Chronicle,* known for its pro-Greek sympathies and for its official connection with Lloyd George's Government, gave me an almost embarrassing importance. No sooner had I revealed my journalistic mission than I received a visit from a Greek staff officer—Lieutenant Casimatis—who put the entire city of Smyrna at my feet, as it were, and as one small token of my right to fulfill the slightest wish, sent round a powerful military car with two tall soldiers, under orders to obey my commands. Tony was pleased with this attention and other courtesies that were showered upon us. It was he, rather than myself, who interviewed the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek army, and received the salutes of its soldiers as we drove up magnificently to General Headquarters.

A military band was playing outside—selections from "Patience," by some strange chance—and in the antechamber of the General's room Greek staff officers, waisted, highly polished, scented, swaggered in and out. The Commander-in-Chief was a very fat old gentleman, uncomfortable in his tight belt, and perspiring freely on that hot day. The windows of his room were open, and the merry music floated in, and the scent of flowers, and of the warm sea. "He received us most politely," as poor Fragson used to sing in one of my brother's plays, and with his fat fingers moving about a big map, explained the military situation. It was excellent, he said. The Greek army was splendid, in training and *morale,* and longing to advance against the Turk, who was utterly

demoralized. Those poor Turkish peasants, forcibly enlisted by Mustapha Kemal, wanted nothing but leave to to go home. The Greek advance would be a parade—the Commander-in-Chief, speaking in French, repeated his words with relish and pride—"a parade, sir!" Unfortunately, he said, Greece was hampered by differences among the Allies. The French were certainly intriguing with the Turkish Nationalists of Angora—supplying them with arms and ammunition! The Italians were no better, and very jealous of Greek claims in Asia Minor. Greece had trust, however, in the noble friendship of England, in the sympathy and aid of that great statesman, Mr. Lloyd George. . . . The Greek army would astonish the world.

So the old gentleman talked, and I listened politely, and asked questions, and kept my doubts to myself. There was not a British officer I had met anywhere, except General Hamilton in Smyrna, who had a good word to say for the fighting qualities of Greek soldiers. There was not one I had met who believed that they could hold Smyrna for more than a year or two, until the Turks reorganized.

It was Lieutenant Casimatis who introduced us to the Commander-in-Chief, and he devoted himself to the task of presenting us to all the people of importance in Smyrna, and taking us to schools, hospitals, museums, and other institutions which would prove to us the benevolence and high culture of Greek rulers in Asia Minor. He was a cheery, stout little man, speaking English, which he had learnt in India, and almost bursting with good nature and the desire to pump us with Greek propaganda.

He took us to the Greek Metropolitan at Smyrna, a black-bearded, broad-shouldered, loud-laughing, excitable Bishop of the Orthodox Church, wearing the high black hat and long black robe of his priestly office, but reminding us of one of those Princes of the Church in

the Middle Ages who led their armies to battle and sometimes wielded a battleax in the name of the Lord. "An old ruffian," I heard him called by an English merchant of Bournabat, whose sympathies, however, were decidedly pro-Turk. A picture representing the martyrdom of St. Polycarp at Smyrna, in the early days of the Christian era, adorned the wall opposite his desk, and he waved his hand toward it and spoke of the martyrdom of the Christian people, not so long ago as that, but only a year or two ago, when they were driven from the coast, as that Armenian girl had told me. "The spirit of St. Polycarp," he said, in barbarous French, "animates the Greek Christians to-day, and nothing would give me greater joy than to die for the faith as he did." I have never heard whether this pious wish was fulfilled. It seems to me probable.

For a long time he talked of the sufferings of the Greeks and Armenians, calling upon various men in the room—his secretaries and priests—to bear witness to the truth of his tales. Presently, with some ceremony, servants came round with silver trays laden with glasses of iced water and some little plates containing a white glutinous substance. As the guest of ceremony, it was my privilege to be served first, which did not give me the chance of watching what others might do. I took a spoonful of the white substance, and swallowed it, hoping for the best. But it was the worst that I had done. I discovered afterward that it was a resinous stuff called *mastica,* something in the nature of chewing gum. The mouthful I had swallowed had a most disturbing effect upon my system, and even the Metropolitan was alarmed. My son Tony, served second, was in the same trouble.

In the Greek schools of Smyrna all the scholars were kept in during the luncheon hour, while we went from class to class inspecting their work and making polite

bows and speeches to the teachers. The scholars, ranging from all ages of childhood, did not seem to bear us any grudge for their long wait for lunch, and we were much impressed by their discipline, their pretty manners, their beautiful eyes. Tony felt like the Prince of Wales, and was conscious of the "glad eyes" of the older girls. . . . When Smyrna was reported to be a city of fire and massacre, I thought with dreadful pity of those little ones.

We touched with our very hands the spirit of this ancient race in the time of its glory, when we went into the museum and handled the pottery, the gods, the household ornaments, the memorials—found by peasants with their picks not far below the soil—of that time when Homer was born (it is claimed) in this city of the Ægean, when the Ionians held it, when Lysimachus made it great and beautiful, until it was one of the most prosperous ports in the world, crowded with Greek and Roman and Syrian ships trading between the West and East.

Lieutenant Casimatis took us to his little home away on a lonely road beyond the Turkish quarter, and we spent an evening with his family, a handsome wife and three beautiful children who sang little songs to us in French and Greek. The poor lady was nervous. Some shadow of fear was upon her because of that Turkish army beyond the Greek trenches. I hope with all my heart she escaped from Smyrna with her babes before the horror happened. . . . I drank to the welfare of Greece in the sweet resinous wine which Lieutenant Casimatis poured out for us. It was a sincere wish, but at the back of my mind was some foreboding.

We drove out one day to Boudja and Bournabat, past the slopes of Mount Pagus and away in the hills. Turkish peasants riding on donkeys or in ox wagons jogged along the dusty tracks. We passed Turkish cemeteries with tombstones leaning at every angle below tall, black cypress trees, and looking back, saw the brown roofs

of Smyrna below, as in a panorama under the hot sun which made the gulf like molten metal.

In the country we lost touch with the Western world. It was Asia, with the smell and color and silence of the East. A camel caravan moved slowly in the valley, like a picture in "The Arabian Nights." But at Boudja, and later at Bournabat, we were astonished to see English-looking girls in English summer frocks, carrying tennis racquets, and appearing as though they had just left Surbiton. These two villages were inhabited by British merchants who had been long settled there as traders in Oriental carpets, spices, raisins, dates, and the merchandise of the East. We called on one of them at Bournabat, and I rubbed my eyes when, with Asia Minor at the gate, we drove up to a house that might have been transplanted from Clapham Park in the early Victorian period, when Cubitt was building for a rich middle class.

The house was furnished like that, except for some bearskins and hunting trophies, and the two old ladies and one old gentleman who gave us tea might have been transported on a magic carpet from a tea party in the time of the Newcomes. We had toasted muffins, and the stouter of the two old ladies (who wore a little lace cap and sat stiffly against an antimacassar, in a chintz-covered chair) asked whether we would take one or two lumps of sugar with our tea. Tony, who was beginning to feel an exile from civilization, beamed with happiness at this English life again.

The old gentleman had been the greatest trader in Asia Minor, and in his younger days had hunted with Turkish peasants in the mountains. He loved the Turk still, though he deplored the cruelties they had done to the Christian populations in the war. For the Greeks he had pity, and dreadful forebodings. He knew something of what was happening behind the Turkish lines, with Mustapha Kemal. There would be no peace until

they had Smyrna back again. The Greeks had claimed too much. Venizelos had lost his head. Lloyd George —The old man sighed, and fell into a gloomy silence. "I'm afraid of the future," he said, presently. "Nobody will listen to my advice. The Greeks think I am pro-Turk. What I want is a just peace, and above all peace. This is only an armed truce." He told me many things about the situation which filled me with uneasiness. I promised to see him again, but after a few days we left Smyrna for Athens.

We traveled in a little steam yacht which had once been Vanderbilt's and now was a Greek passenger ship, called *Polikos*. It was crowded with Greek officers, in elegant uniforms, and very martial-looking until a certain hour of the evening. The passage began in a wonderful calm, and after darkness there were groups of singing folk of different nationalities, as on that other ship, but presently a terrific storm broke upon us, and the singing ceased, and the *Polikos* was a ship of sick and sorry people.

Tony and I crept to our bunks in a big crowded cabin, and the Greek officers in the other bunks were frightfully and outrageously ill. Early next morning their martial appearance had gone and they were the disheveled wrecks of men. Tony, with extreme heroism, staggered to the saloon and ordered ham and eggs, but thought better of it before they came, and took to his bunk again, below mine which I, less brave, had never left. We were glad to reach Athens without shipwreck.

We had a week of joy there, in dazzling sunshine, and wandered about the ruins of the Acropolis and touched old stones with reverence, and sipped rose-tinted ices in the King's Gardens, and saw Greek boys throwing the discus in the very arena where the games were played in the Golden Age, and tried to remember odd scraps of classical knowledge, to recall the beauty of the Gods and the wis-

dom of the poets. All that need not be told, but it was as pro-Greeks that we returned to England, and with memories which made us understand more sharply the tragedy of that defeat when the Cross went down before the Crescent, and the horror happened in Smyrna, and all the world held its breath when Constantinople was threatened with the same fate.

XXIV

IN October of 1921 I went to Russia for the purpose of making a report on the Famine to the Imperial Relief Fund.

Much as I disliked the idea of seeing the grisly vision of Famine after so many experiences of war and its effects, I felt that it was an inescapable duty to accept the invitation made to me. I was also drawn by a strong desire to see the conditions of Russia, outside as well as inside the famine area, and to get first-hand knowledge of the system of Bolshevism which was a terror to the majority in Europe, with some secret attraction, holy or unholy, among men and women of revolutionary or "advanced" views.

It was impossible to know the truth from newspaper reading. Stories of Russian atrocities and horrors arrived from Riga, Helsingfors and other cities on the border of the Soviet Republic, and were denied by other correspondents. Knowing the way in which "atrocities" had been manufactured in time of war, by every nation, I disbelieved all I read about Russia circulated by the "White" propaganda department, while doubting everything which came from "Red" sources. I think that was a general attitude of mind among unprejudiced people.

Even with regard to the Famine it was impossible to get near the truth by newspaper accounts. *The Daily Mail* said the tales of famine were vastly exaggerated. *The Daily Express* said there was no famine at all. *The Morning Post* suggested that it was a simple scheme for deluding Western nations in order to feed the Red Army. I wanted to know, and promised to find out and report

impartially to the Imperial Relief Fund. *The Daily Chronicle* agreed to publish a number of articles written after my return from Russia (in order to avoid censorship), and I arranged to send an account to *The Review of Reviews,* of which I was the rather nominal editor.

A journalist friend of mine named Leonard Spray was also under instructions from *The Daily Chronicle* to go to Russia, for another line of inquiry, and much to my delight promised to wait for me in Berlin so that we could travel together. It would make a great difference having a companion on that adventure, for I confess that I hate the lonely trail.

It was a question of waiting for passports from the Soviet Foreign Office in Moscow. I had applied to the Russian Trade Mission in London and was recommended by an assistant to Krassin, an intelligent and well-educated young Russian who professed devoted adherence to Communism while doing himself remarkably well, I thought, with all the material pleasures of capitalistic luxury. After a couple of weeks my credentials arrived, my passport was indorsed with the stamp of the Soviet Republic, and I had in this way a talisman which would open the gate of Red Russia and let me enter the heart of its mystery. To some of my friends it seemed the free admission to a tiger's cage.

In Berlin I was advised to buy blankets, cooking utensils, as much food as I could carry, and illimitable quantities of insect powder. I took this advice, and with Leonard Spray and a very useful lady who understood the German ways of shopping, we bought this outfit, remarkably cheap, reckoning in German marks which were then not quite 4,000 to the English pound.

Among other items we acquired an enormous Dutch cheese, round and red, which we wrapped up in a towel. It became our most precious possession, and, as I may tell later, came to an honorable and joyous end. A

quantity of solid alcohol in tins somewhat in the style of the "Tommy's Cooker" also bulged out our bags and were an immense boon by enabling us to heat up food and drink on our Russian journey.

Spray and I spent two solid days obtaining *visas* in Berlin for all the countries through which we had to pass on our way to the Russian frontier by way of Riga—those new Baltic States created at Versailles.

Our journey to Riga was half a nightmare and half a farce, and Spray called our train the "Get in and Get out Express." We generally arrived at a new frontier in the dead of night or in the early hours of dawn, after fitful sleep. Then we were awakened by armed guards demanding to see our visa for each side of the "Danzig corridor" for Lithuania, Esthonia, and Latvia.

At Eydtkühnen, in East Prussia, we had a six-hours' wait and were able to see something of the Russian invasion and Germany's "devastated region" which had been the greatest cause of terror to the German mind when the "Russian steam rolier" first began to roll forward before its subsequent retreat. Russian cavalry had done a lot of damage—the Germans had plenty of atrocity stories to set beside those of Alost and Louvain—and we saw even at that late date, so long after those early days of war, the ruins of burnt-out farms and shell-wrecked houses. But not many. German industry had been quick at work, and Eydtkühnen was built up like a model town, with red-tiled roofs not yet toned down by weather, and shop windows just exhibiting their first stocks.

As we passed through the new Baltic States—Lithuania, Esthonia, Latvia—I had an impression that the old British Armies of khaki men had been transferred to those far countries. At every station there was a crowd of soldiers, all of them clad in unmistakable khaki from British stores, but made into misfits for bearded, or unshaven, portly or slouchy men who looked—many of

them—like the old Contemptibles after years of foreign exile and moral degeneration. Yet it would be unfair to say they were all like that, for these Baltic peasants were sturdy fellows enough, and, I should say, hard fighting men.

In Riga we put up for three or four days, waiting for a train into Russia and permission from Soviet representatives in that city to cross the Russian frontier. In spite of our visas from headquarters, those Riga Bolsheviks were extremely insolent and put up a blank wall of indifference to our requests for railway facilities. There seemed to be no chance of a place in any train, and very little chance of a train.

Spray and I kicked our heels about in the little old city, very German in its character, which seemed in a state of stagnation and creeping paralysis. In its once busy port we saw no ship but a vessel carrying a cargo of apples which it unloaded on the quayside. The restaurants were almost deserted, and we drank little glasses of Schnapps in solitary cafés. After midnight there was the awakening of a squalid night life and we watched the Riga manifestation of the fox-trot mania, and an imitation of the Friedrichstrasse *Wein Stube,* with a fair amount of amusement on my part because of the strange types here in a city filled with Russian exiles, Letts, Poles, Germans, Swedes, Lithuanians, and all variety of northern races. But it was not Russia, which we had come to see.

I doubt whether we should ever have set foot in Russia if it had not been for the American Relief Administration established in Riga and just beginning to send food supplied into the famine area. The chief of the Riga headquarters promised us two places on the next food train going to Moscow, and broke through all formalities by reckoning us as members of his staff.

"What about the Famine?" I asked, and he said, "There's a Famine all right, with a capital F."

It was a queer journey from Riga to Moscow—unforgotten by me. I have put the spirit of it, as indeed of all my experience in Russia, into my novel "The Middle of the Road," under a thin guise of fiction, with some imaginary characters. The train started at night, and Spray and I, with our baggage carried by Lettish porters, stumbled along unlit rail tracks to a long train in absolute darkness, except in a few carriages where candles, stuck in their own grease, burned dimly on the window ledges. In the corridor was a seething mass of Lettish and Russian porters, laden with the enormous baggage of Russian, British, German, American, and other couriers, who shouted at them in various languages. A party of young American clerks and typists for the central headquarters in Moscow of the American Relief Administration (always known as the A.R.A., or even, shorter, as "Ara") smoked cigarettes, cursed because of the darkness and filth and stench and lack of space for their baggage, and between their curses sang ragtime choruses.

Violent action and terrific language in the American accent, on the part of a large-sized man, cleared the corridor somewhat, and I met, for the first time, a cheery young giant whom I have put into my novel as "Cherry of Lynchburg, U.S.A.," but who is really H. J. Fink, courier, at that time, to the A.R.A. He is known as "The Milk-fed Boy" by his fellow-travelers, and but for his enormous good nature, his mixture of ferocity and joviality with obstructive Bolsheviks, his genial command of the whole "outfit" from the *"provodniks"* or guards to the engine drivers, the journey would have been more intolerable than we found it. I take off my hat, metaphorically, to the "Milk-fed Boy."

Our blankets were uncommonly valuable in the filthy carriage of bare boards with wooden bunks which I shared with Spray. By rigging up a "gadget" of straps strung across the carriage, we were able to use our solid

alcohol for heating up soups and beans, with only a fifty-per-cent chance of setting the bunks on fire. We went easy on the red Dutch cheese, remembering that we might have greater need of it in times to come.

The insect powder was extraordinarily good, for the insects, which came out of their lairs as soon as the train warmed up. They throve on it. It sharpened their appetite for Leonard Spray, who suffered exceedingly. Afterward, all through Russia, he was a victim of these creatures who at the first sight of him leapt upon him joyously. By some thinness of blood, or anti-insect tincture —I strongly suspect the nicotine of innumerable "gaspers"—I was wonderfully immune, and Russian lice had no use for me, though I encountered them everywhere, for Russia is their stronghold as carriers of typhus, with which the people were stricken in every city and village.

We saw Red soldiers for the first time at Sebesh, the Russian frontier, anæmic-looking lads, wearing long gray overcoats and gray hoods, rising to a point like Assyrian helmets, with the Red Star of the Soviet Republic above the peak. Here at Sebesh also we saw the first trainload of refugees from the famine area, whom we met in hordes throughout our journey. They were Letts, and in a bad state, after being three months on the way, in closed cattle trucks. Many were typhus-stricken. All were weak and wan-looking, except some of the children, who had a sturdy look in their ragged sheepskins. A man spoke to me in English, with an American accent. He had come from Ufa, three thousand miles away, and spoke tragic words about the people there. They were starving, and near death.

Our train crawled forward through flat, desolate country. The people we saw at wayside stations looked wretched and gloomy. A light snow lay on the ground, and the woods were black against it, and grim. Many times our engine panted and then stopped for lack of

fuel. We waited while fresh timber was piled on. The journey seemed interminable but for the laughter of the "Milk-fed Boy," and tales of Russian tragedy by Mr. Wilton, the King's messenger, who had a queer red glint in his eyes, and a suppressed passion beneath his quiet and charming grace of manner, when he spoke of all that agony in the country he loved. So at last we reached Moscow, and in a little while came to know its way of life.

The fantastic aspect of the city, and especially at its heart by the palace of the Kremlin, seemed to me as wild as an Oriental nightmare in a hasheesh dream, with golden pear-shaped domes, and tall towers, and high walls with fan-shaped battlements, and step flights of steps leading to walled walks, and old narrow gateways guarded by Red soldiers. There was something sinister as well as splendid in that vast fortress palace which is a city within a city. It seemed to tell of ancient barbarities. There was a spirit of evil about its very walls, I thought. Perhaps vague memories of Russian history were sharpened by the knowledge that somewhere within those walls was the brooding mind of Lenin, whose genius had drowned Russia in blood and tears, if all one heard, or a thousandth part of it, were true.

I entered the Kremlin one day on a visit to Radek—whose name means "scoundrel"—and was arrested three times at the guard posts before reaching the rooms where the chief propaganda agent of Soviet Russia lived with his wife and child, in simple domesticity, while he pulled wires in all parts of the world to stir up revolution, or any kind of trouble. Smiling through his spectacles, this man who looked a cross between an ancient mariner and a German poet, with a fringe of reddish beard round his face, was disarmingly frank and cynical on the subject of Anglo-Russian relations, and had a profound and intimate knowledge of foreign politics which startled me.

He knew more than I did about the secret intrigues in England and France.

Leonard Spray and I were billeted in a house immediately opposite the Kremlin along an embankment of the river called the Sophieskaya. It was, indeed, more than a house, being the palace of a pre-war monopolist in sugar, and most handsomely furnished in the French Empire style, with elegant salons on whose walls hung some valuable pictures, among which I remember a Corot, and a Greuze.

We arrived in the dark, after a visit to the Soviet Foreign Office and an interview with a melancholy, soft-spoken, cross-eyed Jew, by name Weinstein, who was in charge of foreign visitors and correspondents. A pretty Lettish girl, shuffling along in bedroom slippers, opened the door to us, and locked us in afterward. Then the housekeeper, a tall Swede who spoke a little of all languages, conducted us up a noble stairway, richly carved, to our bedroom, which was an immense gilded salon without a bed. This lack of sleeping accommodation was remedied by four Red soldiers who came staggering in under bits of an enormous four-poster which they fixed up in a corner of the room. Spray took possession of it, and I slept on a broad divan.

It was bitterly cold, and we were almost frozen to death. I shall never forget how Spray used to wrap himself up in the blankets to the top of his head, like an Eskimo in his sleeping bag. That house was full of strange people whom we used to pass in the corridors, including a deputation of Chinese Mandarins from the Far Eastern Republic, and a mission of Turks from Angora. One evening while we were there, Tchicherin, the Foreign Minister, with whom I had a long interview, gave a banquet on the third anniversary of the Soviet Republic to all the missions represented in Moscow. It was a very handsome affair. All the leading Bolsheviks

were in evening dress, the Chinese Mandarins wore cloth of gold, wine flowed copiously, and watching from the doorway of my bedroom, I wondered what had happened to Bolshevism and Communism, and what equality there was between those well-fed, elegantly dressed gentlemen, dining richly in their noble rooms, and those millions of starving peasants who were waiting for death, and dying, in the Volga valley, or even the population of Moscow itself, not starving altogether, but pinched, and half hungry in their ragged sheepskins.

Spray and I explored the life of Moscow, freely, as I must admit, for never once were we aware of any deliberate espionage about us, though often there were watchful eyes.

We had arrived in time to witness a complete reversal of the Communistic system by what Lenin called the "New Economic Laws." On October 17, 1921, while we were there, Lenin made an historic speech in which he admitted, with amazing frankness, the complete breakdown of the Communistic way of life which he had imposed upon the people. He explained, with a kind of vigorous brutality of speech, that owing to the hostility and ignorance of the peasants, who resisted the requisition of their food stuffs, and the failure of world revolution which prevented any international trade with Russia, industry had disintegrated, factories were abandoned, transport had broken down, and the system of rationing which had been in force in the cities, could no longer be maintained.

The cardinal theory of Communism was that in return for service to the State, every individual in the State received equal rations of food, clothes, education, and amusements. That was the ideal, but it could no longer be fulfilled, for the causes given.

"We have suffered a severe defeat on the economic front," said Lenin. "Our only safety lies in a rapid retreat upon prepared positions."

He then outlined the "New Economic Laws," which abolished the rationing system, re-established the use of money, permitted "private trading" which had been the unpardonable crime, and even invited the introduction of foreign capital.

We saw the immediate, though gradual and tentative effect of this reversal of policy. It was visible in the market places of Moscow, where peasants freely sold the produce of their farms under the eyes of Red soldiers who previously would have seized and flung them into prison for trading in that way.

Among these peasants stood long lines of men and women who as I saw at a glance were people of the old régime—aristocrats and intellectuals. Shabby as most of them were, haggard and wan, unshaven and unwashed (how could they wash without soap?), their faces, and above all their eyes, betrayed them. They stood, those ladies and gentlemen of Imperial Russia, holding out little articles which they had saved or hidden during the time of revolution. The women carried their underclothing, or their fur coats, tippets, and caps, embroidered linen, old shoes and boots, their engagement rings, brooches, household ornaments. The men—mostly old fellows—held out woollen vests, socks, pipes, rugs, books, many odds and ends of their ancient life. Who bought these things I could never tell, though I saw peasant women and old soldiers fingering them, and asking the price, and generally shrugging their shoulders and walking away.

I spoke to some of the ladies there in French or German, and at first they were very much afraid and would not answer, or left the market place immediately, lest this were some police trap which would endanger their liberty or life. Almost all of them, as I found afterward, had been imprisoned for doing secretly the very thing which they now dared to do in the open market place, but with trembling fear at first.

In the same way, timidly, with nervous foreboding, little groups of families or friends opened a few shops in the Arbat, furnishing them with relics of their old homes, and stocking them with a strange assortment of goods.

Two restaurants opened, one called "The English Restaurant," where Spray and I used to dine, almost alone, except for a Red Commissioner or two who came in for coffee and a secret inspection, and now and then a few ladies, furtively, for a plate of soup. The restaurant keepers were of good family and ancient rank. The lady spoke English and French, and told me many tales of her tragic life during the years of revolution. Behind the bar was a pretty, smiling girl of sixteen or so, amazed and delighted to see two English customers. Her father, dressed like a seafaring man, was charming in his courtesy to us, but always afraid.

Even now I dare not write too freely about the people we met by hazard, or by introduction, lest any words of mine should do them harm. There was one family, of noble blood, who lived in two squalid rooms divided by a curtain from a public corridor. The two daughters had one pair of decent boots between them. They took turns to go out "visiting" at the British Mission which gave Sunday afternoon receptions to a little group of ladies, and taught them the fox trot and two step and other dances which had become a mania in many Western nations, but were utterly unknown in Russia, cut off from all the world.

The old gentleman their father, and their charming mother, had dirty hands. There was no soap in Russia, and in those rooms no chance of hot water, except for tea. I marveled at their courage (though the old man wept a little), and at the courage of all those people of the old régime, who were living in direst poverty, in perpetual fear of prison, or worse than that. They saw the ruin of Russia, but still had hope that out of all that

agony, and all their tears, some new hope would dawn for the country they loved. So many people told me, and among them one bedridden lady, near to death, I think, who said that there would be a new and nobler Russia born out of all this terror and tribulation.

Moscow was not starving to death, though many in it were always hungry. When the American Relief Administration opened a soup kitchen in the famous old restaurant, The Hermitage, thousands of children came to be fed, but, on the whole, they were not famine-stricken —only underfed and uncertain of the next day's meal.

With its dilapidated houses, many of them wrecked by gunfire in the first days of the revolution, Moscow had a melancholy look, and few of its people, outside the Commissar and Soviet official class had any margin beyond the barest needs of life. But the people in the mass looked healthy, and they were not deprived of all light and beauty in life. The opera, and two or three theaters were open, crowded every night by the "proletariat" in working clothes. In the Imperial box of the opera, with its eagles covered under the Red Flag, sat a group of mechanics with their wives, and between the acts the foyer was crowded with what looked like the "lower middle class," as we should see them in some music hall on the Surrey side of London. The opera and the ballet were as beautiful as in the old days, maintaining their historic traditions, though all else had gone in Russia, and it was strange to see this stage splendor in a Republic of ruin. . . . But not yet had I seen the famine.

I came closer to the effects of famine in Petrograd. That city, grim but magnificent as I saw it under heavy snow, had a sinister and tragic look. During the war its population had been 3,000,000 and more. When Spray and I walked along the Nevski Prospekt, where all the shops but six or seven were barricaded with wooden planks, there were only 750,000 people in the whole of

this great city. Palaces, Government offices, great banks, city offices, huge blocks of buildings, were uninhabited and unlighted. Many of those who had been government officials, rich merchants, factory owners, were shoveling snow upon the streets, or dragging loads of wood on sledges over the slippery roads. They wore bowler hats, black coats with ragged collars of astrachan, the clothes of a "genteel' world that had gone down into the great gulfs of revolution.

At every street corner were men and women selling cigarettes. Some of those women, and one I especially remember, were thinly clad, shivering in the biting wind, and obviously starved. The very look of them made me shiver in my soul.

In Petrograd I went to a home for refugees from the famine region. All round the city were great camps of these people, who had come in a tide of flight—hundreds of thousands—when the harvest of 1921 was burnt as black as that of 1920 in the awful drought. Four thousand or so were in one of the old Imperial barracks, and they had come three thousand miles to reach this refuge at the end of their journey. Outside, in Petrograd, there was a hard, grim frost. In these bare whitewashed rooms there was no heat, for lack of fuel, and men, women and children lay about in heaps, huddled together in their sheepskins for human warmth, tormented by vermin, fever-stricken, weak. Too weak to stand, some of them, even to take their place in line for the daily ration of potato soup. A doctor there took us round. He pointed to those with typhus, and said, "There's no hope for them. They'll be dead to-morrow or next day."

When we crossed a courtyard, he stopped a moment to thrust back a heavy door. "Our morgue," he said. "Three-days' dead." Inside was a pile of dead bodies, men, women and children, flung one on top of the other like rubbish for the refuse heap. Hands and legs ob-

truded from the mass of corruption. It was the end of their journey.

But the opera was very brilliant in Petrograd, some distance from that heap of mud-colored corpses. I went to the Marinsky theater and heard "Carmen." It was marvelously staged, admirably sung, and there was a packed audience of "trade unionists," as I was told, on free tickets, but as everybody in Russia had to belong to a trade union or die, it did not specify the character of the people closely. I think most of them were of the clerical class, with a few mechanics. On the way back we followed a party of young men and women walking in snow boots and wrapped to their ears in ragged furs or woollen shawls. They were laughing gayly. Their voices rang out on the still frosty air under the steely glint of stars. . . . So there were still people who could laugh and make love in Russia!

How did they live, these people? I never could find out in actual detail. Russian money meant nothing to me. When I changed ten pounds in Moscow, I received four big bundles of notes, containing three million roubles. My first experience with the purchasing power of this money was when I wanted to buy a pair of boots in the market place. They were good top boots, splendid looking for snow and mud, but when I was asked one million roubles, I was abashed. Yet, after all, it was not much in English money. But what did it mean to those Russians?

I found out that the average wage for a mechanic, or Soviet official, or University professor, was 150,000 roubles a month. That sounded well until I came up against those boots, and later discovered that in Petrograd a pound of bread cost 80,000 roubles, a pound of tea 120,000 roubles, ten cigarettes 60,000 roubles. How, then, could any human soul live on 150,000 roubles a month? I asked many of them, and some said, "We

don't live. We die," but others said, "We supplement our wages by speculation." For some time I was puzzled by that word speculation, until I found that it meant bartering. Secretly, and at risk of imprisonment or death, until the "New Economic Laws," there was a general system of exchange in goods. A man with a second pair of boots exchanged them for a sack of potatoes, kept some and bartered the others for tea, or bread, or meat, kept some of that, and bartered the rest for a woollen vest, a fur waistcoat, or a tin of sardines, smuggled in from Riga. And so on, in a highly complicated, difficult and dangerous system of "underground trade." But in spite of "speculation," life was hard, and almost impossible for elderly folk, and the sick, and frail women. For years hundreds of thousands of them had lived on bread and tea and small rations of soused herrings and millet seed. Now there were no rations, but still bread and tea, for those who had the money.

"What do you think of Bolshevism?" asked Spray one night in the Sugar king's palace. We lay in bed, with only our mouths and noses out.

I asked him three questions in return. Was there liberty in Russia? Was there equality? Was there a higher type of civilization and human happiness here than in Western Europe, or any chance of it? I asked the questions without prejudice, and we discussed them between the low divan and the four-poster bed, in that great gilded salon opposite the Kremlin, where, in some secret room, Lenin sat that night scheming out some way of saving Russia from the fate into which he had led it, to test his theory of the Communistic state.

We could find no liberty. The two chief papers published—*Pravda,* and *Izvestia*—were propaganda sheets under Government control. There was no freedom of speech or opinion. There was no equality, even of misery

—surely the first test of the Communistic state. Between the Soviet Commissars, even the "trade-union" audience of the Marinsky theater, and the peasants, the workers, the underfed masses, there was a gulf as wide as between the profiteers and unemployed of England, wide though lower down the scale of life on both sides. Civilization, human happiness? Well, there was the Marinsky theater, and those laughing boys and girls. Human nature adapted itself marvelously to the hardest conditions of life. Perhaps there were happy people in Russia, but for the most part, Spray and I had met only those who told us tragic tales, of imprisonings, executions, deaths, misery.

When we left Moscow and traveled across Russia to Kazan, and took a boat down the Volga, and sledges across the snow fields to the villages where Famine dwelt, we left human happiness behind us and saw nothing but suffering and despair, hunger and pestilence.

It was again due to the American Relief Administration that we were able to make that journey. Colonel Haskell, chief of the A.R.A., and a man of indomitable energy, iron will power, and exquisite courtesy, invited Spray and myself to join his own party which was going to Kazan on a tour of inspection under his command, and after that he would provide us with a ship for the Volga voyage. Without that immense help of the A.R.A., all-powerful in Russia because it was the one source of hope in the famine region, I should have seen nothing outside Moscow. It was they who controlled the railways, got the trains to move, and forced officials to work.

It was a four-days' journey to Kazan. The carriages were verminous, and Spray was tortured again—and we crawled slowly through the dreary woods and plains. Colonel Haskell and his staff carried good rations which they shared with us, and at night, when our darkness was illumined by candlelight, we played poker for Russian roubles, gambling wildly, as it seemed, in thousands of

roubles, but losing or winning no more than a few shillings.

One man on board impressed me beyond words. It was Governor Goodrich of Indiana, who had come to report to Washington on the agricultural conditions and prospects of Russia, and the truth about the Famine. He was an elderly man with the fresh complexion of a new-born babe, and a powerful clear-cut face, wonderfully softened by the look of benevolence in his eyes and the whimsical smile about his lips. "Governor Jem" he used to be called in Indiana, and he must have been a gallant fellow in his youth, before he became lame in one leg. Now he had come as a knight-errant to Russia, for the rescue of a stricken people. I think no man of greater quality ever went into Russia, or ever came out of it, and it was due not a little to his report (which he allowed me to read) that the Government of the United States, acting through the American Relief Association, fed ten million Russians every day in the famine regions, and saved that number from certain death by hunger or disease.

Kazan lay under a heavy mantle of snow. It was now the capital of the "Tartar Republic," a province of Soviet Russia, on the edge of the richest grain-growing districts of the Volga valley, where now there was no grain. It was a garden city, with many great houses where the nobles of Imperial Russia had taken their pleasure in summer months, now inhabited by misery, hunger, and disease.

There were forty homes here for abandoned children —abandoned not by the cruelty of their parents but by their love, because they could not bear to see their little ones wailing over empty platters. I went into a number of them, and they were all alike in general character. In one of them were fifteen hundred children, naked, or merely clothed in little ragged shirts. Their clothes had

been burnt because of the lice in them, which spread typhus fever. There were no other clothes to replace their ragged old sheepskins and woollen garments. There was no heat in the rooms, for lack of fuel. There was no furniture. On the bare boards they huddled together, these little wizened things, with deep, sunken eyes, and tight-drawn skin, like little bald-headed monkeys. There were many homes like that, and worse than that, because many of the children were dying, and the rooms reeked with their fever, and the very doorposts crawled with lice.

I went into the hospitals, and they were dreadful. Because there was no fuel for heat, these people, stricken with typhus, dysentery, all manner of hunger diseases, were huddled together in unventilated wards for human warmth. Many of the beds had been burnt for fuel and most of them lay on mattresses or the bare boards. Those who had beds lay four together, two one way and two the other. There were no medicines, no anæsthetics, no soap, no dressings. The nurses were starving, and dying of the diseases they could not cure. They came clamoring round the doctor of the A.R.A. with whom I went, begging for food in a wild animal way which made his heart go sick.

But there was an opera, even in Kazan! It was true that the stench of it was pretty bad, and that its audience tightened their belts from time to time in lieu of supper, but Madam Butterfly delighted them, they thrilled to the "Carmen" of a Persian prima donna.

One night the ladies and gentlemen of the opera invaded the headquarters of the A.R.A. after midnight. They were hungry, and made no secret about it. So the young Americans of the Kazan headquarters brewed cocoa in a saucepan, with the help of one of the ladies, and scraped up some bully beef and beans and a loaf or two and some apples, and odds and ends. Not much for

a banquet! Spray and I whispered together! I fetched out the last hunk of our round red cheese. It was received with a chorus of approval. It died a sacrificial death in the cause of art and beauty. The Persian prima donna had an insatiable appetite. . . . Out in the streets of Kazan were starving wanderers, and in the station lay the latest of the abandoned children.

The last boat to go down the Volga before the ice came was put under command of the press representative of the A.R.A., my good friend Murphy, a most kind and generous-hearted soul. Spray and I were the only passengers. We three explored the ship before she left the quayside. She had been a rescue ship for the fugitives from famine, and was in a noisome state. We dared not linger in the sleeping cabins. The very washbasins were crawling. That night Murphy and I slept on the table in the dining saloon—the safest place. Spray gave himself up for lost and curled up on the floor, where he tossed all night. I was cook on that voyage, and did rather well with boiled beans and a mess of pottage. We went down to Tetiushi, and found ourselves among the people of famine. . . .

After two droughts in successive years, there was no harvest of any account. The Red soldiers had requisitioned the peasants' reserves of grain for rationing the cities. Without reserves they had no means of life. The Soviet Government had supplied them with seed grain for the next harvest, and they had sown it, not expecting to reap it. They had also sent, lately, some barges of potatoes, but they lay there rotting. To carry them to the villages, horses were needed for the sledges, but there was no fodder, and the horses were dying, or dead. So we discovered the State of Tetiushi.

By a message from the Prime Minister of the Tartar Republic, four horses were found for us, and two sledges, after many hours of waiting, and we set out across the

snow to the villages. They were very silent when we entered. They seemed abandoned. But we saw in one or two of their timbered houses little wizened faces staring at us from the windows. They were faces like those I had seen in the homes for abandoned children, monkeylike. We went into the cottages and found there peasant families waiting for a visitor who tarried, which was Death.

They showed us the last food they had—if they had any left. It was a brownish powder, made of leaves ground up and mixed with the husks of grain. Others showed us bits of hard stuff like lead. It was a bluish clay dug from a hillside called Bitarjisk. It had some nutritive value, but it swelled when eaten, and was the cause of dreadful agony to children. Peasant women, weeping very quietly, showed us their naked children, with distended stomachs, the sign of starvation in its last stage. From other cottages they came to where we stood, crossing themselves at the doorways, in the Russian way, and then lamenting.

Handsome Russian peasants, with blue eyes and straw-colored beards, struck their breasts with a gesture of absolute despair, and said—we had a Russian with us who spoke English—that death could not be long delayed, for all of them. The last cows had been killed for lack of fodder. There was no milk for the children, as for a long time there had been no bread. Here and there a woman wailed loudly, or grasped my wrist with her skinny hand and spoke fiercely, as though I denied her food. I remember one cottage in which a whole family lay dying, and nearly dead. It was the Famine. . . .

I will not write more about the horrors here. In many articles, and in my novel "The Middle of the Road" I have given the picture of it, and the agony of it.

It is said that two million of these people died. That is Nansen's figures. That twenty million did not die is

due to the magnificent work of the A.R.A. and the Save the Children Fund who, against all political prejudice and for humanity's sake, achieved a great rescue of these stricken folk. As I have said, the A.R.A. alone fed ten million people a day in the famine area, and I pay a tribute here to the courage and efficiency and devotion of those young Americans whose work I saw, and of whose friendship I am proud. Our people did less, having less means, but it was work well and nobly done in the spirit of Christianity kept alight in a dark and cruel world, which is this jungle of Europe.

XXV

IN the spring of 1919, while the Peace Conference was sitting in Paris, I made my first visit to the United States, and lectured in many American cities. I went there again in 1920 and 1921, and on the third visit traveled from New York to San Francisco.

I regard these American visits as the greatest experience of my life, apart from the War, and they added enormously to the knowledge of world forces and the human problem which I had been studying among the peoples of Europe. I was, and still remain, convinced that the United States will shape, for good or ill—and I believe for good—the future destiny of the world, for these people, in the mass, have a dynamic energy, a clear-cut quality of character, and a power not only of material wealth, but of practical idealism, from which an enormous impetus may be given to human progress, in the direction of the common well-being, international peace, liberty, decency, and average prosperity of individual life.

During those three visits, when I talked with innumerable men and women of great intelligence and honesty of thought, I was "made wise," as they call it, to many of the darker aspects of American life. I was not unconscious of a strong strain of intolerance; a dangerous gulf between the very rich and—not the very poor, there are few of those—but well-paid, speeded-up, ugly-living, dissatisfied labor; something rather hysterical in mass emotion when worked up by the wire-pullers and the spell-binders; and the noisy, blatant, loud-mouthed boasting vulgarity of the mob. I saw the unloveliness of "Main Street," I met "Babbitt" in his club, parlor car, and

private house. But though I did not shut my eyes to all that, and much more than that—a good deal of it belongs to civilization as well as to the United States—I saw also the qualities that outweigh these defects, and, in my judgment, contain a great hope for the world. I met, everywhere, numbers of men and women who have what seems to me a clean, sane, level-headed outlook on life and its problems. They believe in peace, in a good chance for the individual, in a decent standard of life for all people, in honesty and truth. They are impatient of dirt, however picturesque, of ruin, however romantic, of hampering tradition, however ancient. They are, in the mass, common-sense, practical, and good-natured folk, who, in the business of life, cut formalities and get down to the job.

But behind all that common sense and their practicality, they are deeply sentimental, simply and sincerely emotional, quick to respond to any call upon their pity or their charity, and when stirred that way, enormously generous. I agree with General Swinton, the inventor of the "Tanks" who, after a tour in the United States, told me, with a touch of exaggeration, that he thought the Americans, as a nation, were the only idealists left in the world. Europe is cynical, remembering too much history, and suffering too much disillusionment. The United States, looking always to the future, and not much backward to the past, is hopeful, confident of human progress, and strangely and wonderfully eager to find a philosopher's stone of human happiness, for which we, in Europe, have almost abandoned search.

I think that, as a people, they are more ready than any other to do some great work of rescue for humanity (I have told how they fed ten million people a day in Russia), and to adopt and carry out an ideal on behalf of humanity in the way of peace and reconstruction, at some personal sacrifice to themselves. That is possible

at least in the United States, and it may almost be said that it is impossible in any other nation.

As a personal experience, my first visit to the United States was exciting and rather overwhelming, in an extremely pleasant way, except for my extreme nervousness. For the first time in my life I was made to believe (except for secret doubts and a sense of humor) that I was a person of some importance. By good fortune, of which I was not aware until my arrival in New York, I had gained the good opinion, and almost personal popularity, of an immense American public from coast to coast. I do not minimize the pleasure of that, the real joy of it, for there is no reward in the world so good to a man who for years has been an obscure writer, as to realize at last that his words have been read and remembered, with emotion, by millions of fellow mortals, almost by a whole nation—and this had happened to me. It happened by the great luck that since the entry of the United States into the War my daily dispatches from the Western front had been published in *The New York Times,* and a syndicate of newspapers covering the whole country. Day after day during those years of enormous history, I appeared with the grape fruit and the cereal at millions of American breakfast tables, and because of the things I had to tell, and perhaps, a little, the way in which I told them (I tried to give the picture and the pity of the things I saw), I got home to the bosom and business (to use Francis Bacon's words) of the American merchant, lawyer, and city man, to the lady whom he provides with a Packard or a Ford (according to his rung on the social ladder) and to the bright young thing who is beginning to take an interest in the drama of life outside her dancing school or her college rooms. My articles were read on lonely farms, in tenement houses, by Irish servant girls, Slav foundry workers, German metal workers, clerks and telephone girls, as well as by

all manner of folk in Fifth Avenue, Riverside Drive, and the Main Street of many towns. I am not making a boast of that, for if I had written like an archangel instead of like a war correspondent (there's a difference), I should not have secured those readers unless *The New York Times* and its syndicate had stepped in where angels fear to tread—in Chicago, and other American cities. But it was my luck, and, as I say, pleasant and encouraging.

People wanted to see the fellow whose name had become familiar to them over the breakfast table. They wanted to see what manner of man he was (and some were disappointed); they wanted to know if he could speak as he wrote (and presently they knew he didn't); they wanted to pay back by hospitality, by booking seats for the theaters, by friendly words afterward, for some of the things he had written at a time when they had wanted to know.

One of the first little thrills I had was when I stood at the desk of the Vanderbilt hotel, ten minutes after getting away from the dockside, where scores of telegrams were waiting for me, inviting me to speak at all sorts of places with strange and alarming names, and having picked up the receiver in answer to the urgent calls, heard the voice of a telephone girl saying, "Welcome to our city, Philip Gibbs! . . . and here's another call for you." I have always remembered that little human message from the girl at the switchboard.

I was still a journalist, though about to become a lecturer, and *The New York Times* desired me to write a series of articles recording—rapidly!—my first impressions of New York. It still seems to me a miracle that I was able to do so, for I was caught up by the social life of New York like a straw in a whirlpool, and my head was dazed by the immensity of the city, by its noise, its light, its rush of traffic, its overheated rooms, its newspaper reporters, its camera men, and, when I staggered

to my bedroom for a moment's respite, by the incessant tinkle of the telephone which rang me up from scores of addresses in New York city, from Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, the Lord knows where.

I wrote those articles, blindly, subconsciously, like a man in a nightmare, and they came out rather like that, with a sort of wild impressionism of confused scenes, which seemed to please the American people.

They were vastly amused, I was told, by one phrase which came from my nerve ganglia all quivering with the first walk through Broadway at night. I confessed that I felt "like a trench cootie under the fire of ten thousand guns." Now a cootie is a louse, as I had lately learnt, and that simile tickled my readers to death, as some of them said, though it expressed in utter truthfulness the terror of my sensation as a traffic dodger down the Great White Way.

But that terror was easily surpassed when I faced for the first time an audience in the Carnegie Hall. As I drove up with my brother, and saw hundreds of motor cars setting down people in evening dress who had come to have a look at me (and paid good money for it), with the odd chance of hearing something worth while—poor dears!—I was cold with fright. My fear increased until I was stiff with it when, having shaken hands with my brother and received his hearty pat on the shoulder, like a man about to go over the top with the odds against him, I went through a little door and found myself on a large stage, facing a great audience. I was conscious of innumerable faces, white shirt fronts, and eyes—eyes—eyes, staring at me from the great arena of stalls, and from all the galleries up to the roof. As I made my bow, my tongue clave, literally, to the roof of my mouth, my knees weakened, and I felt (as some one afterward told me I looked) as cheap as two cents.

What frightened me excessively was a sudden move-

ment like a tidal wave among all those people. They stood up, and I became aware that they were paying me a very great honor, but the physical effect of that movement was, for a moment, as though they were all advancing on me, possibly with intent to kill!

My chairman was my good and great comrade, Frederick Palmer, the American war correspondent. I am told he made a fine introductory speech, but I did not hear a word of it, and was only wondering with a sinking heart whether I should get through my first few sentences before I broke down utterly. It was a fearful thought, to make a public fool of myself like that! . . .

I had one thing in my favor—a strong, far-reaching voice, and I had been told to pitch it to the center of the top gallery. I know they heard. A young foreigner I know—not an American—a most friendly and candid soul, told me that he had heard every word, and wished he hadn't. Attracted by the title of a book of mine, "The Soul of the War," he had bought four tickets for himself and friends, believing that at last he would hear the inner meaning of the war and its madness, in which he had found no kind of sense. But when he heard my straightforward narrative of what the British Armies had done, he sighed deeply, and said, "Sold again!" and tried to sleep. My loud, clear-cut sentences hammered into his brain, and would not allow him even that consolation.

That first audience in the Carnegie Hall was immensely kind, extraordinarily generous and long-suffering. They applauded my stories of British heroism as though it had been their own heroes, laughed at my attempts to tell Cockney anecdotes, and did not let me know once that I was boring them excessively. Some spirit of friendship and good will reached up to me and gave me courage. Only once did they laugh in the wrong place, and then they couldn't help themselves. It was when for the sixth time or more I glanced at my wrist watch and then in a sudden

panic that it had stopped and that I had spoken an hour too long, put it to my ear!

The way off the platform was more difficult than the way on. I had come through one little door, but there were six of them exactly the same. At the conclusion of my speech, I bowed, walked rapidly to one of the doors, and found it would not budge! I returned again and bowed to the audience before trying another door. No, by heaven it wouldn't open! Again I returned and bowed, and made another shot for a swing door. At the fourth try I went through. . . . That experience of doors that wouldn't open became a nightmare of mine in American sleeping cars when I suffocated from overheated pipes.

I have lectured a hundred times since then, made large numbers of speeches (sometimes as many as five a day) in American cities, faced every kind of audience from New York to San Francisco and across the Canadian border, in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and never conquered my nervousness, so that, if I am called upon for a speech at a public dinner in England, now, I suffer all the pangs of stage fright until I am well under way. But at least my experiences in the United States helped me to hide behind a calm and tranquil mask, and not to give myself away so utterly as that first time in Carnegie Hall.

It was on my second visit, and at my opening lecture in the same great hall, that I obtained—by accident—the most wonderful ovation which will ever come to me in this life. It was my night out, as it were, most memorable, most astonising, most glorious. For it *is* a glorious sensation, whatever the cynic may say, to be lifted up on waves of enthusiasm, to have a great audience of intelligent people cheering one wildly, as though one's words were magic.

It was none of my doing. My words were poor commonplace stuff, but I stood for something which the finest

audience in New York liked with all their hearts that night—England, liberty, fair play—and against something which that audience hated, disloyalty to the United States, discourtesy to England, foul play.

It was the Sinn Feiners who did it. A friend of Ireland, and advocate of Dominion Home Rule, I was one of the last men they should have attacked. But because I was an Englishman who dared to lecture before an American audience, they were determined to wreck my meeting, and make a savage demonstration. I was utterly unaware of this plot. I was not speaking on the subject of Ireland. I was talking about Austria, and was trying to tell an anecdote about an Austrian doctor—I never told it!—when from the middle gallery of the Carnegie Hall which was densely packed from floor to ceiling, there came a hoarse question in a stentorian voice with an Irish accent: *"Why don't you take the marbles out of your mouth?"* Rather staggered, and believing this to be a criticism of my vocal delivery and "English accent," I raised my voice, but it was instantly overwhelmed by an uproar of shouts, catcalls, whistlings, derisive laughter, abuse, and a wild wailing of women's voices rising to a shriek.

For a few moments I could not guess what all the trouble was about. I stood there, alone and motionless, on the platform, suddenly divorced from the audience, which I watched with a sense of profound curiosity. All sorts of strange things were happening. Men were going at each other with fists in the gallery, where there was a seething tumult. In the stalls I was aware of a very fat man in evening dress wedged tightly in his seat and bawling out something from an apoplectic face. Two other men tried to pull him out of his chair. In scattered groups in the stalls were ladies who seemed to be screaming at me. Other ladies seemed to be arguing with them, hushing them down. One lady struck another over the

head with a fan. People were darting about the floor or watching the scrimmage up above. From the front row of the stalls friendly faces were staring up at me and giving me good counsel which I could not hear.

Over and over again I tried to speak above the tumult. I carried on about that Austrian doctor, and then abandoned him for another line of thought. I stuck it out for something like half an hour before there was comparative silence—the police had come in and dragged out the most turbulent demonstrators—and then I continued my speech, interrupted frequently, but not overwhelmed. Everything I said was applauded tremendously. Some reference I made to England's place in the world brought the audience to its feet, cheering and cheering, waving handkerchiefs and fans, and when I finished, there was a surge up to the platform, and thousands of hands grasped mine, and generous, excited, splendid things were said which set my heart on fire.

As I have said, it was not my doing, and it was not any eloquence of mine which stirred this enthusiasm. But that audience rose up to me because they were passionate to show how utterly they repudiated the things that had been said against England, how fiercely angry they were that a friendly visitor to the United States should be howled down like this in the heart of New York. Again it was my luck, and I was glad of it.

It was not the last time I had to face hostile groups. I decided to give a lecture on the Irish situation in which I would tell the straight truth, fair to Ireland, fair to England. The Sinn Feiners rallied up again. The fairer I was to Ireland, the madder they became, while the other part of the audience cheered and cheered. In the midst of the commotion, a tall black figure jumped on to the platform. "Hullo!" I thought. "Here I die!" But it was a Catholic priest, Father Duffy, a famous chaplain of the American Army, who announced himself as an

Irish Republican, but pleaded that I should have a fair hearing. They just howled at him. However, by patience and endurance I broke through the storm and said most of what I wanted to say.

The next morning I was rung up on the telephone by an emotional lady. She had a great scheme, for which she desired my approval and collaboration. She had arranged to raise a bodyguard of stalwart society girls who would march to the hall with me, on the evening of my next lecture, and in heroic combat put to flight the Irish girls who were to parade with banners and insulting placards. . . . I utterly refused to approve of the suggestion.

My lecture agent, Mr. Lee Keedick, enjoyed those "Sinn Fein tea parties," as they were called, with such enormous gusto, that there were some friendly souls who suggested that he had incited them for publicity purposes! But he missed the best, or the worst. In Chicago, on St. Patrick's Eve, I was three-quarters of an hour before I could utter a single sentence. It was what the press called next morning a "near riot" and there were some Irish-American soldiers there, in uniform, who fought like tigers before they were ejected by the police.

For the first time in my life I had a police bodyguard wherever I went in Chicago. Two detectives insisted on driving in my taxicab, and they were both Irishmen, but, as one explained in a friendly manner, "It's not your life we're troubling about, Boss. It's our reputation!"

Boston, from Mr. Keedick's point of view, was a disappointment. A great row was expected there, being the stronghold of the Sinn Fein cause, and when I appeared, behind the stage, there was a large force of police stripped for action. The police inspector came to my dressing room, and demanded permission to precede me on the stage and announce to the audience that if there was any demonstration he would put his men on to them.

I refused to give that permission. It seemed to me the wrong kind of introduction for an Englishman to an American audience. As a matter of fact, they behaved like lambs, in the best tradition of Boston, and I was quite disconcerted by their silence, having become used to the other kind of thing which I found exhilarating.

Stranger things happen to an English lecturer in the United States than in any other country. At least they happened to me. I shall never forget, for instance, how in the middle of a speech to the City Club of New York, I was thrust into a taxicab, hurried off to the 44th Street theater, received with a tremendous explosion (a flash-light photo!) in the dressing room of Al Jolson, the funny man, thrust into the middle of a harem scene (scores of beautiful maidens) and told to make a speech on behalf of wounded soldiers while the audience raffled for an original letter from Lloyd George to the American nation.

Surprised by my rapid transmigration from the City Club, and by my presence in an Oriental harem, very hot, rather flustered, and not knowing what to do with my hands, I kept screwing up a bit of paper which had been given to me at the wings, and by the time I had finished my three-minutes' speech it was a bit of wet, mushy pulp. When I left the stage, a white-faced man in the wings who had been making frantic signs to me, informed me coldly that I had utterly destroyed Lloyd George's letter to the American nation which had just been raffled for many hundreds of dollars. . . . After that I went back to finish my speech at the City Club.

XXVI

WHEN I first visited the United States in 1919, the whole nation was seething with a conflict of opinion between pro-Wilsonites and anti-Wilsonites.

It was not a mere academic controversy which people could discuss hotly but without passion. It divided families. It caused quarrels among lifelong friends. The mere mention of the name of Wilson spoilt the amenities of any dinner party and transformed it into a political meeting.

In my first article for *The New York Times,* recording my impressions of America, I slipped out the phrase that "I was all for Wilson." I received, without exaggeration, hundreds of letters from all parts of the United States, "putting me wise" to the thousand and one reasons why Wilson's doings in Paris would be utterly repudiated by the Senate and people. He had violated the Constitution. He had acted without authority. He had tried to commit the United States to his scheme of the League of Nations against their convictions and consent. On the other hand, there were many people who still regarded him as the greatest leader in the world and the noblest idealist.

Ignorant, like most Englishmen, of the parties and personalities of American politics, at that time, I kept my ears open to all this, but couldn't avoid falling into pitfalls. I made a delightful "gaffe," as the French would say, by turning to one gentleman in the Union Club before he acted as my chairman to the lecture I was giving there, and asked him to tell me something of Wilson's character and history. It was Mr. Charles

Hughes, ex-governor of New York, and defeated candidate for the Presidency against Wilson himself.

It was the last question which I ought to have asked, as people explained to me later. But I shall never forget the fine and thoughtful way in which Mr. Hughes answered my question and the subtlety with which he analyzed Wilson's character, without a touch of personal animosity or a trace of meanness. I was aware that I was in the presence of a great intellect, and a great gentleman.

I had the opportunity of talking to Mr. Hughes in each of my three visits, and when he was Secretary of Foreign Affairs in Washington, and each time I was more impressed with the conviction that he was likely to become one of the greatest statesmen of the world, and, unlike many great statesmen, had a fine and delicate sense of honor, and a desire for the well-being, not only of the United States but of the human race.

Between my first and second visits Wilson's tragedy had happened, and the United States had refused to enter the League of Nations. The Republican party had swept the country, inspired by general disgust and disillusionment with the Peace of Versailles, by a tidal wave of public opinion against any administration which would involve the United States in the jungle of Europe's racial passions, and by a general desire to be rid of a government associated with all the restrictions, orders, annoyances, petty injustice, extravagance, and fever of the War régime. As a friend of mine said, the question put to the electors was not "Are you in favor of the League of Nations?" but "Are you sick and tired of the present administration?" And the answer was, "By God, we are!"

President Harding reigned in place of President Wilson. Owing to the kindness of a brilliant American journalist named Lowell Mellett who had acted for a time as war correspondent on the Western front, and who

seemed to have the liberty of the White House, the Senate, Congress, and every office, drawing-room, and assembly at Washington, I was received by the President, and had a little conversation with him which ended in a message to the British people through *The Review of Reviews,* of which I had become editor. It was a message of affection and esteem for the nation which, he said, all Americans of the old stock regarded still as the Mother Country—a generous and almost dangerous thing to be said by a President of the United States.

A tall, heavy, handsome man, with white hair and ruddy face, the new President seemed to me kind-hearted, honest and well-meaning, without any great gifts of genius or leadership, and a little timid of the enormous responsibility that had come to him. A year later I saw him again, and had the honor of introducing my son Tony. He was surprised that I had a son of that height and age, and it reminded him instantly of an anecdote referring to Chief Justice White and a little lawyer who introduced a tall, husky son to him. "Ah," said the Chief Justice, "a block of the old chip, I see!"

It was due to my friend Mellett again that I had the opportunity, and very extraordinary honor, for a foreign journalist, of giving evidence before the House Committee on Naval Disarmament. It was a Committee appointed to report on the possibility of calling the Washington Conference. I was summoned to give evidence in the House of Congress without any time to prepare notes or a speech, and when I took my place like a mouse in a hole in the center of a horseshoe of raised seats occupied by about twenty-five members of the Committee, I was in a state of high tension which I masked by a supreme effort of nerve control. For I was, to some extent, speaking not only on behalf of Great Britain, and taking upon myself the responsibility of expressing the views of my own people, but on behalf of all idealists in

all nations who looked to the United States for leadership in the way of international peace. I knew that I must be right in my facts and figures, that I must say nothing that could give offense to the United States, and nothing that would seem like disloyalty to England, while telling the truth, as far as I knew it, without reserve, regarding England's naval and military burdens, the dangers existing in Europe, and the sentiment of the British people.

After a preliminary statement lasting ten minutes or so, to which the Committee listened in absolute silence, I was closely and shrewdly cross-examined by various members, and had to answer very difficult and searching questions. It was one of my lucky mornings. I came through the ordeal better than I could have hoped. I was warmly congratulated afterward by members of the British Embassy who told me I had said the right things, and I honestly believe I did a tiny bit of good to England and the world that day. *The New York Times* and other papers published my address verbatim and it went on to the records of Congress. Anyhow, it did no harm, and I was thankful enough for that.

My lectures on the second visit had nothing to do with the War, except in its effects, and I spoke entirely on the subject of European conditions, always with a strong plea to the United States to come in boldly and throw her moral and economic influence on the side of international peace and reconstruction. From the very first I took the line, which I held with absolute conviction, that Germany would be unable, after the exhaustion of war, to pay the enormous indemnities demanded by the Peace of Versailles, and that if Germany were thrust into the mire and went the way of Austria, Europe would not recover from financial ruin. At the same time I pointed out the rights and justice of France, and gave her view fairly and generously, as I was bound to do, because of my illimitable admiration of French heroism, my

enormous pity for French sacrifice, my certain knowledge of French danger. My argument was for economic co-operation between the peoples of Europe, as the only means of saving that civilization, with demobilization of hatreds as well as armies, and a new brotherhood of peoples after the agony and folly of the war.

I risked my popularity with the American people in making speeches like that. I could have got easy applause by calling upon the old god of vengeance against the Germans for at that time in the United States there was less forgiveness than in England for all the evil and suffering caused by Germany, less tolerance of "pacifists," as much brutality in the average mob. But though I aroused some suspicion, some hostility, on the whole American audiences listened to my argument with wonderful enthusiasm and generosity.

I saw a distinct change of opinion after my first visit (I am not pretending that I had anything to do with it), in favor of closer friendship with Great Britain, and economic co-operation with Europe. In every city to which I went I found at least two or three thousand people according to the size of my place of lecture, quickly and ardently responsive to the idea that America and Great Britain, acting together, might lift the world out of its ruined state and lead civilization to a higher plane. In city clubs, women's clubs, private dinner parties, drawing-room meetings, I found great numbers of people desperately anxious about the responsibility of the United States toward European nations, eager to do the right thing though doubtful what to do, poignantly desirous of getting some lead higher than that of self-interest (though not conflicting with it), and with a generous warm-hearted sympathy for the British folk. Doubtless these groups were insignificant in numbers to the mass of citizens with whom I never came in touch, among whom there was an old strain of suspicion and hostility to Eng-

land, and all sorts of currents of prejudice, ill will, hatred, even, among Irish, German, and foreign stocks, in addition to the narrow nationalism, the vulgar selfishness of many others. That is true, but the people I met, and to whom I lectured, were the *intelligentsia,* the leaders of social life, and business life, the wives, mothers, and daughters of the "leading citizens," the arbiters and, to some extent, the creators of public opinion. Their hopes, ideals, visions, must, sooner or later, be reflected in national tendencies and acts. Only blind observers would now say that the United States has not revealed in recent acts and influence that broadening of outlook which I perceived at work below the surface in 1921, and did something, perhaps—not much—to help, by a simple and truthful report of facts from this side of the world.

In the United States I had, strange as it may seem, a certain authority as an economic expert! This may surprise my intimate friends, and most of all my wife, who knows that I have never been able to count my change, that I have not as much head for figures as a new-born lamb, and that I have never succeeded in making out a list of expenses for journalistic work without gross errors which have put me abominably out of pocket. Yet many of the greatest financiers in the United States—men like the brothers Warburg, and Mr. Mitchell of the National City Bank—invited me to address them on the economic situation in Europe, and agreed with my arguments and conclusions. I remember one dinner at which I expounded my views on that subject to no less than sixty of the leading financial experts in New York, afterward being subjected to a fire of questions which, to my own amazement, I was able to answer. The truth is, as I quickly perceived, that a few very simple laws underlie the whole complicated system of international trade and finance. As long as one held on to those laws, which I did, like grim death, one could not go wrong in one's analysis of the European

situation, and all facts and figures adjusted themselves to these elementary principles.

Money, for example, is only a symbol for the reality of values behind it—in grain, cattle, mineral wealth, labor and credit.

When paper money is issued in advance of a nation's real values, it is merely a promissory note on future industry and production.

France, Germany, and most European nations were issuing vast quantities of these promissory notes which were not supported, for the most part, by actual wealth.

The prosperity of a country like Germany increased the prosperity of all other countries. Its poverty would lead to less prosperity in all other countries.

Commercial prosperity depends upon the interchange of goods between one country and another, and not upon the possession of money tokens. And so on.

By keeping these facts firmly in my mind, I was able to keep a straight line of common sense in the wild labyrinth of our European problems. But I had also seen the actual life and conditions of many countries of Europe, and could tell what I had seen in a simple, straight way to the business men of the United States. It was what they wanted to know, beyond all other things, and I think they believed my accounts more than those of more important men, because I was not a Government official, or propagandist, but a simple reporter, without an ax to grind, and an eyewitness of the conditions I described.

Among the men who asked me to tell them a few things they wanted to know, or the things they knew (better than I did) but wanted to discuss, was Mr. Herbert Hoover, for whom I have the deepest admiration and respect, like all who have met him. He came into my room at the Lotus Club one day, unannounced except for a tap at the door by his friend and assistant,

Barr Baker. I had just returned from a journey, and my room was littered with shirts, socks, collars, and the contents of my bags. He paid no heed to all that but sat back in an arm chair and after some questions, talked gravely of world affairs. I need not record here that conversation I had with him—the gist of it is in my book of American impressions, "People of Destiny," but I was glad and proud to sit in the presence of a man—so simple, so frank, so utterly truthful—who organized the greatest work of rescue for suffering humanity ever achieved in the history of the world—the American Relief Administration. But for that work, many millions of men, women, and children in the nations most stricken by war would have died of starvation, and Europe would have been swept from end to end by the scourge of pestilence which follows famine.

I seem to have been bragging a little in what I have lately written, making myself out to be an important person, with unusual gifts. That is not my intention, or my idea. The fact is that the people of the United States give any visitor who arrives with decent credentials a sense of importance, and elevate him for a while above his usual state of insignificance. They herald him with an exaggeration of his virtues, his achievements, his reputation. Any goose is made to believe himself a stately swan, by the warmth of courtesy shown toward him, by the boosting of his publicity agent, and by the genuine desire of American citizens to make a guest "feel good" with himself.

This has a strange and exhilarating effect upon the visitor. It gives him self-confidence. It actually does develop virtues in him. His goose quills actually change into something like swansdown, and his neck distinctly elongates. There is something in the very atmosphere of New York—electric, sparkling, a little intoxicating—which gives a man courage, makes him feel bigger, and

not only feel bigger, but *be* bigger! This is no fantasy, but actual fact. In the United States I was a more distinguished person that ever I could be in England. I spoke more boldly than ever I could in England. I was rather a brave fellow for those few weeks each year, because so many people believed in my quality of character, in my intelligence, in my powers of truth-telling, whereas in England no one believes in anybody.

So I do not boast or preen myself at all when I write about the wonderful times I have had in the United States. It happens to everybody who does not go out of his way (or hers) as some do, to insult a great-hearted people, to put on "side" in American drawing-rooms, to say with an air of superiority "We don't do that in England, you know!"

I visited many American colleges, and with solemn ceremony was initiated into the sacred brotherhood of a Greek letter society which is the highest honor than can be given to a foreign visitor by the youth of America.

In Canada—at Winnipeg—I was made a Veteran of the Great War by a gathering of old soldiers.

At Salt Lake City I lectured to 6,000 Mormons—most moral and admirable people—in their Tabernacle, and was received on the platform by a Hallelujah Chorus from sixty Mormon maidens.

In Detroit, where I began my first speech of the day at 9.30 in the morning, I spoke down a funnel on the subject of the Russian Famine, which was "broadcast" to millions of people late that night.

I traveled thousands of miles, and in every smoking carriage talked with groups of men who told me thousands of anecdotes and put me wise to every aspect of American life from the inside.

I was entertained at luncheon, dinner, and supper by the "leading citizens" of scores of cities, and made friends with numbers of charming, courteous, cultured people.

I was interviewed by battalions of reporters who received me as a brother of their craft, and never once let me down by putting into my mouth words I did not wish to say. They were mostly young college men and, though I hate to say it, a keener, better-educated crowd, on the whole, than the average of their kind in English journalism.

I will record only one more of the wonderful things that happened to me as a representative of English journalism in New York.

On the eve of my departure, after my second visit, a dinner was given in my honor at the Biltmore. It was organized by Mrs. MacVickar, who has the organizing genius of a lady Napoleon, and a committee of ladies, and a thousand people were there. They included all the most distinguished people in New York, many of the most distinguished in America, and they were there to testify their friendship to England. They were there also to express their friendship, if I may dare say so, to me, as a man who had tried to serve England, and America, too, in speaking, and in writing, the simple truth. They wrote all their names in a book that was given to me at the dinner, and I keep it as a great treasure, holding the token of a nation's kindness.

What added a little sauce piquante to the proceedings was the delivery from time to time during the dinner of notes from Sinn Feins parading outside the hotel. The first message I read was not flattering. "You are a dirty English rat. You ought to be deported." Another informed me that I was a paid agent of the British Government. Another was a general indictment informing all American citizens that it was a disgrace to dine with me, and an act of treachery to their own nation. Another little missive described me as a typical blackguard in a nation of cutthroats. So they followed each other to the high table, where I was the guest of honor. . . .

I had a great time in the United States on each of my three visits, but notwithstanding all I have said, I shall never make another lecture tour in that country. The fatigue of it demands the physique of an Arctic explorer combined with that of an African lion tamer. Several times I nearly succumbed to tinned tomato soup. Twice did I lose my voice in a wind forty below zero, and regain it by doses of medicine which destroyed my digestive organs. Nightly was I roasted alive in sleeping berths. Daily did my head swell to unusual proportions, not in conceit, but in a central heating system which is a terror to Englishmen. Visibly did I wither away as I traveled from city to city, received by deputations of leading citizens on arrival, after a sleep-disturbed night, with the duty ahead of keeping bright and intelligent through a long day's programme, saying the right thing to the gracious ladies who entertained me at lunch, the bright thing to the City Club which entertained me to dinner, the true thing to all the questions asked about Europe, England, Lloyd George, Prohibition, Mrs. Asquith, the American flapper, Bolshevism, France, and the biological necessity of war, to business men, professors, journalists, poets, financiers, bishops, society leaders in Kansas City, or Grand Rapids, the President of the Mormon church, the editors of the local newspapers, the organizers of my lecture that evening, and the unknown visitors who called on me at the hotel all through the day, and every day.

One can't keep that sort of thing up. It's wearing. . . .

I remember that in the Copley Plaza Hotel at Boston, a little old gentleman carrying a black bag tapped at my door and introduced himself by the name of Doctor Gibbs. He said that his hobby in life was to search out Gibbs in the United States, and he found thousands! He presented me with a copy of the Gibbs Family Bulletin, and opening his black bag produced a photograph of his great-grandfather.

It was my son Tony who called my attention to the fact that I was amazingly like that venerable man, who was toothless (he lived before the era of American dentistry) and with hair that had worn thin as the sere and yellow leaf. I decided that I should become exactly like him, "sans hair, sans teeth," if I continued this career as an English lecturer in America. In order to avoid premature old age, I made a resolve (which I shall probably break) not to make another lecture tour in the United States.

But of all my journalistic adventures, I count these American experiences as my most splendid time, and for the American people I have a deep gratitude and affection. I can only try to repay their kindness by using my pen whenever possible to increase the friendship between our countries, to kill prejudice and slander, and to advocate that unwritten alliance between our two peoples which I believe will one day secure the peace of the world.

THE END

New Books for Boys

JIM SPURLING MILLMAN — By Albert W. Tolman

The second in Mr. Tolman's splendid series which began with *Jim Spurling, Fisherman.* Jim is now a college freshman; with a group of college cronies he undertakes to make a little money during the summer, running a small sawmill in the Maine woods. How these fellows meet the unscrupulous scheming of their competitors with ingenuity and rough-and-tumble when necessary, makes a story with thrills and a lot of fascinating information about the romantic and technical side of sawmill life.

BOLIVAR BROWN — By Bide Dudley

The story is laid in Missouri, the land of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, and contains every element guaranteed to please American boys and girls—from the secret cave and mysterious stranger to the treasure. Bolivar and Skeets go through the same vicissitudes lovingly inflicted by fond parents, on boys everywhere—suffered by Bide Dudley, himself. In fact, speaking of Bolivar, Mr. Dudley says, "I was that boy."

CATTY ATKINS, SAILORMAN — By Clarence Budington Kelland

Catty and his boon companion, Wee-wee Moore, go adventuring on the sea. Mr. Topper invites them to go with him on a yachting trip. Catty notices that they are followed by a mysterious black yacht. A search for buried treasure and a fake map made by Catty figure importantly in this exciting story of the boys' sea trip.

THE BOY EXPLORERS IN DARKEST NEW GUINEA — By Warren H. Miller

Amazing true experiences of the boy explorers, Nicky and Dwight. This story of their adventures with hostile natives while diving, hunting, shooting, and digging for what are some of the most valuable specimens that have ever come out of that wild country, is full of fight and daring and gives a vivid account of the native life and picturesque country.

THE KIDNAPPED CAMPERS ON THE ROAD — By Flavia A. C. Canfield

Here again are Archie and Edward, whose adventures you enjoyed in *The Kidnapped Campers.* This is the story of their work and play and thrilling experience as they travel west in Uncle Weary's big camping van.

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New Books for Girls

PHILIPPA'S FORTUNE By Margarita Spalding Gerry

Not since Jean Webster's *Patty* has there been so charming a heroine as Philippa. She is the gift of the loved novelist, Margarita Spalding Gerry, to growing girls and boys of to-day. *Philippa's Fortune* is the first of a new series. You'll remember Philippa and look forward to meeting her again, in the many stories to follow about this very modern girl, and her experiences and adventures at home and at school.

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

Peter Newell Edition

Of course, you want this universally loved story for your children, and you want it in the best and most sympathetic edition. This new edition contains forty illustrations in black-and-white and a full-color cover insert, wrapper, and frontispiece by Peter Newell. A critic of this edition writes: "It must have been destined from the beginning that Mr. Newell should illustrate Alice. It is matter for general felicitation that so suitable a union has been accomplished at last."

THE KIDNAPPED CAMPERS ON THE ROAD

By Flavia A. C. Canfield

Here again are Archie and Edward, whose adventures so many children have enjoyed in *The Kidnapped Campers*. Once more the two boys spend their vacation with Uncle Weary. In this story of their work and play and thrilling experience as they travel West in Uncle Weary's big camping van, the author has successfully portrayed two normal, happy boys, whose outdoor training is the best preparation for a useful manhood.

DEEDS OF HEROISM AND BRAVERY

Edited by Elwyn A. Barron

Amazing, true tales of the Great War, tales of men like Lufbery, Guynemer, Rickenbacker, Luke, and Richthofen; of women like Edith Cavell; tales of others whose fine deeds are recorded only in this volume and who have passed the test of bravery. Eight full-color and over one hundred and fifty black-and-white illustrations. With full-color wrapper, cover insert, and frontispiece.

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